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WILDERNESS

Spring
(October–December)
1998, no 70
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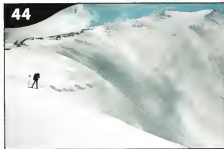
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Giving Back to the Outdoors

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WARNING

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Please ensure that submissions are accompanied by an envelope and sufficient postage. Names and addresses should be written on disks, manuscripts and photos. While every care is taken, no responsibility is accepted for material submitted. Articles represent the views of the authors, and not necessarily those of the publisher.

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That we live in uncertain times may be a cliché but it is almost universally recognised as an accurate reflection of our situation at the doorstep of the third millennium AD. Every day the media bombard us with examples—and the results—of this fast-moving and radically changing era. Asia's 'meltdown'; tilted 'playing fields'; an economy 'rationalised' and 'globalised' overnight; the environment pulped for a fast buck. The way we think and speak is being politically 'corrected'; rural Australia is screaming; One Nation is dividing the community; job security has become an illusion; long-term marriage is no longer the norm; and much of our youth seems hell-bent on self-destruction. Every person in Australia is affected by some of these concerns.

Readers of *Wild* know the intrinsic value of wild places. They know from repeated personal experience that in wild places you can slow down, relax, reflect and get back in touch with yourself. The ability of the natural world to calm, refresh and give artistic inspiration has been recognised for thousands of years. It wasn't by chance that Jesus chose to spend 40 days in the wilderness, or that Wordsworth wrote his immortal poetry about England's spectacularly beautiful Lake District. Even those seeking to market resorts for yuppies recognise the universal need to 'get away from it all'. At the depths of the Great Depression of the early 1930s Australians turned to bushwalking in numbers not seen again to this day. But it is sad that the natural world has never been more at risk than at present. At a time when our need for it is greater than ever we sit helplessly by, allowing it to be torn down and built over for short-term economic gain.

The bush is not the answer for everyone. Since time began, people have also sought solace in other ways. The trouble is that those ways seem to be as much under threat as the natural world. Spiritual life, for example, has been under siege and in a state of decline—at least in the West—for many years. In its place people have tried everything from New Age mumbo-jumbo to rampant consumerism and exotic Oriental philosophies and practices.

The family itself, particularly the extended family, is faring little better. Dissolvable marriage and disposable 'partners' are not the foundation for a solid family life.

If you want to lose yourself, or find yourself, in your work you'll have to be flexible. There's no guarantee that your job, your employer—or your industry, for that matter—will be there tomorrow.

That old stand-by, just doing things with friends, has its problems, too. Not only are we fast becoming a nation of spectators, not participants, but increasingly even that leads to isolation. Walkmen, computers—particularly the Internet—electronic games, TV and video are not exactly sociable activities. And the universal popularity of fast food means that we often do not eat, let alone prepare meals, together.

It's a bleak outlook, particularly for youth. We're caught in a catch-22. So much of the unsatisfactory, seemingly defenceless situation in which we find ourselves results from the loss of the life-sustaining forces mentioned above. Yet at the same time we are contributing to their destruction, and thus to our own.

As *Wild* readers we have repeatedly experienced the value of wild places. We know what a loss their destruction would be. But here, at least, there is something we can do to make a start. (See the opening item in Green Pages, on page 89, for the sort of thing one person close to *Wild* is doing.) Let's stand up for the bush and be counted!

AS VOTED BY YOU

As part of our ongoing efforts to publish the best magazine possible, we want you to nominate your favourite bushwalk/s. In 200 words or less, describe that favourite bushwalk of any length, even if it is in a far-flung or little-known place, and why it appeals to you. (If you have an excellent, original colour slide—preferably featuring you, your family or your friends on your walk/s—please send that as well.) In future issues of *Wild* we plan to 'count down' the 'Top Four' bushwalks as nominated by you, our reader. Write to us at PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181. ●

Chris Baxter

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Burn doubt

Bureaucrats pour cold water on bushfire theories



In *Wildfire* in *Wild* no 69 Rick Jamieson made detailed comment on fire management in the Blue Mountains...

The New South Wales National Parks & Wildlife Service will later this year release for public comment a draft Fire Management Plan for the Blue Mountains National Park...

Several of the comments in Mr Jamieson's letter require further clarification. The pattern of fire in the landscape is not only dependent upon the single factor of fuel loads. Weather patterns, causes of ignition, vegetation type, topography and many other factors are also involved. Hence fuel reduction by frequent and deliberate burning will not eliminate bushfire from the Blue Mountains but it will eliminate many of the native species and their habitats. Some areas that burnt in 1994 burnt again in 1997/98 under drought conditions—in places quite severely. Fuel reduction burning provides protection from extreme bushfire events for only about three years in the Blue Mountains area. The Wollemi fire of last season was deliberately kept out of the Grose valley by an effective fire-fighting strategy, not by the lack of fuel.

At this stage of the scientific debate on pre-European fire patterns, it would be a mistake to assume that universal and regular cool-season burning was Aboriginal practice in the Blue Mountains, as this is not supported by objective analysis of historical sources. Most of the evidence for such an idea comes from more fertile areas and not from the remnant landscapes that make up our National Park system. The best evidence of pre-European fire patterns in this region is the story written in the existing vegetation, where fire histories have selected a suite of plants that have a broad array of responses to fire, including species which require a variety of fire regimes for survival.

The notion that hot fires in summer are 'bad' and 'devastating' for the bush, but low intensity fires in the cooler months are just what the bush needs is simplistic and not supported by scientific evidence. High intensity fires, if not too frequent, can in fact be 'good' for some vegetation types. If applied to entire ecosystems, the rigid simplicity of a 12- to 15-year routine of cool burns could indeed produce a 'cycle of death' in the long term. Considerable scientific evidence indicates that a diversity of fire regimes, including fires of varied intensity and frequency, will best conserve the unique biodiversity of the Blue Mountains...

NPWS and the CSIRO have published a fire ecology bibliography which is available from the NPWS information centre (email: info@npws.nsw.gov.au).

S L Evans

Acting Blue Mountains District Manager
for Acting Director-General
NPWS (NSW)
Blackheath, NSW



● The real nasties

Peter Langtree's 'Walking a fine line' in *Wild* no 69 revived memories of our 1959 traverse, in one stage, of the New South Wales-Victoria straight-line border which begins at the spring near Forest Hill and ends at Cape Howe.

We had no GPS—there was none—no radios or current detailed maps; our only guides were a copy of Black and Allan's 1870 original Border Survey, in places a strip map representing barely a 450 metre width of terrain and a trusty liquid-damped, prismatic, army compass. The line was followed each day to locate major cairns and intermediate rock piles, on the same compass bearing, without deviation except where the western cliffs of Tinga Ringi (Black's spelling) forced a small detour.

Starting with a party of three men and two women, two men withdrew *en route*; the heat of summer, scrub and steep grades east of the Snowy River taking their toll.

We coped with dogwood, acacia and the physically demanding country, plus the pythons along the Genoa River, but the real nasties were the wire grass, sword grass and legions of scrub ticks in the East Gippsland

section. Like Balboa, who crossed Panama and viewed the Pacific Ocean for the first time, our joyous moment was topping the Howe Ranges to see the distant sand-dunes at Cape Howe backed by the same ocean.

It was a great adventure conceived and led by my husband Keith and remains a highlight of our 50 years of bushwalking together as members of the Victorian Mountain Tramping Club.

Daphne McPherson
Foundation & Life Member, VMTC
Eltham, Vic

● Wild clone

In *Wild* no 68 Tom Kaminskas gets it almost right in his Trix hygiene suggestion.

Alcohol is a great sterilising agent but not in a pure form such as methylated spirits. Pure alcohol affects the outer membrane of bacterial cells and renders them impermeable to alcohol—thus preventing them from being killed. Instead, 70 per cent alcohol in 30 per cent water should be used when sterilising: the water helps to keep the cell's outer membrane permeable, allowing alcohol to enter and kill the cell.

Must get back to my cloning...

Steven Wild
Clayton, Vic

● Too remote?

A colleague recently drew my attention to an informative article in *Wild* no 68, in which St John Ambulance was mentioned as a provider of remote area first aid courses (info box, page 37).

Given the national distribution of *Wild*, I wonder whether it is possible in any subsequent references to St John Ambulance first aid training to refer to our single national telephone number, which is 1300 360 455...

...St John also produces high-quality first aid kits...

Nicki Kenyvn
National Manager, Communications
St John Ambulance Australia
Manuka, ACT

● A load of bull

While on school holidays I was catching up on my reading and noticed the news item on page 13 of *Wild* no 68 'Take a tube or two'. The comment that participants were 'happy with the performance of the poo tubes' encouraged me to write this letter.

I was involved in one of the Bushwalking and Mountaincraft Leadership Course

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groups mentioned, where two of our party members used the 'poo tubes'. We discussed how functional they would be, at length, while on the Bogong High Plains, and 'happy' was not a word we used...

The tubes were quite bulky and difficult to pack in your rucksack and when attached to the outside of the rucksack they would often get caught on trees and bushes in the thicker areas of the walk. They only had the capacity for approximately four 'poo's' once wrapped in newspaper. It seemed the newspaper caused the bulkiness and took up most of the room in the tube.

We made some suggestions for improvement: a longer, thinner tube which could possibly fit better in your pack, poo directly into the tube, hoping to hell it was watertight—and anything-else-tight—and place newspaper over the last deposit. This would give the user more room in the tube for longer trips. I guess the other point of view we discussed was: When there was urgency of use, how practical would this system be?

I agree that we need to prevent further pollution of our fragile rivers and bush lands and hope that development of such a product will encourage adventurers to be more aware of minimal-impact techniques.

Toni Froia

Mount Erin Secondary College
Frankston, Vic

● Compost?

...I have recently subscribed to your wonderful magazine after having taken up backpacking last year. I used to buy your magazine intermittently but as I did more trips I found it invaluable, especially after having received the back copies when I subscribed...

Congratulations on an excellent publication, both content wise and in its production/design (I spent 25 years in the printing industry as a compositor)...

Andrew Savic
Oak Park, Vic

● Up the creek

Over the years I have really come to appreciate the great camaraderie, and the fundamental honesty and trust that exist among the 'outdoors' community. It therefore came as a great disappointment to learn of the recent theft of a fellow club member's kayak from the Nymboida Canoe Centre camping ground. Perhaps I was being naïve, but I really thought that we could somehow remain immune from the dishonesty and selfishness that is an everyday part of the wider community...

...if anyone comes across a yellow, plastic Pyranha Mountain 300 with the serial number XDPJS12A2-1 stamped in the cockpit area, you will find a most appreciative owner on (02) 9153 7766.

Christopher Pears
Armidale, NSW

Readers' letters are welcome (with sender's full name and address for verification). A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Write to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

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Snakes alive

New treatment for poisonous bites



World first

Australian surgeons have successfully treated patients who have poisonous bites that have caused the skin and flesh literally to 'die back'. This 'world first' was revealed by



Victorian plastic surgeon Ian Holten at the Annual Scientific Congress of the Royal Australasian College in Sydney in May.

Until now doctors were unable to treat bites from tiger snakes, vipers (common in northern Queensland) and white-tailed spiders which cause necrosis (death) to skin and flesh. Patients had to wait until the die back stopped and then undergo reconstruction surgery. Now a 'vacuum cleaning' treatment enables surgeons to shrink the wound and remove the venom by suction from negative pressure. The treatment is four times as effective in healing chronic wounds.

Treseder triumphant

In May Peter Treseder made two first, unsupported, desert crossings. One was of the Strzelecki Desert which covers parts of South Australia, New South Wales and

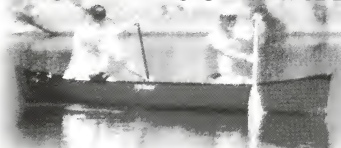
Queensland. He crossed the desert from west to east, starting near Mulka Station, Birdsville, and finishing at Waka Station, Fort Grey. The 270 kilometre crossing was completed in 34 hours and 22 minutes. The second was of the Tirari Desert in South Australia. He went from east to west, starting near Mulka Station and finishing at Lake Eyre North. The 110 kilometre journey took 12 hours and 58 minutes. These crossings were mostly through trackless desert.

During April Treseder was twice successful in the greater Blue Mountains. He

Wedding Cake Mountain from Watts Mountain, Yodellers Range, Blue Mountains, New South Wales. Peter Treseder traversed the whole range in less than ten hours. *David Noble.* Below, tiger-snake bite before treatment. *Ian Holten*

During April Treseder was twice successful in the greater Blue Mountains. He

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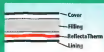
Snuggpak is one of the top names in Europe, let alone the UK. They're particularly involved in the production of lightweight but high-performance sleeping bags and insulated clothing for travellers, expeditors, survival enthusiasts, etc.

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the kokoda memorial walking trail

Six years ago a friend told me her story of the Kokoda Trail in Papua New Guinea. Historically fascinating but very sad as her brother, a war veteran at the age of 24, was among those killed on Brigade Hill by the advancing Japanese forces. The story inspired me to gather a group of similar-minded friends and head to Port Moresby to walk the Kokoda Trail.

The nine-day walk took us through some of the toughest terrain on earth; the intense humidity took its toll and the hordes of mosquitoes and endless mud tested our resolve.

Along the track a number of plaques depict the major battles which took place along the Kokoda Trail between the Australian and Japanese forces. These bronze plaques give a precise account of each battle. We felt humbled and decided to build a bronze plaque on Brigade Hill to mark the battle which had been fiercely fought there. This memorial was unveiled in 1996.

Because the Kokoda Trail is not accessible to most Australians we felt that the suffering that took place there should be commemorated somewhere in Australia. We investigated the possibility of replicating the plaques.

The '1000 Steps' in the Dandenong Ranges National Park in Upper Ferntree Gully were chosen as an appropriate place. This magnificent rainforest area close to Melbourne is renowned for its breathtaking scenery in peaceful surroundings.

Right, Kokoda Trail memorial, Dandenong Ranges, Victoria. *Kim Wells*. Below right, burnt forest, Wollangambe wilderness, Blue Mountains, New South Wales. *Roger Lembit*

Thanks to the cooperation of many parties, the dream became a reality. A plaque was erected—a magnificent, large, bronze relief map of the entire Kokoda Trail showing all the significant battles, the toughness of the climb and all along the track. We then built nine smaller plaques along the 1000 Steps.

So the Kokoda Trail and the battles fought there have now received the recognition they deserve.

The Kokoda Memorial Walking Trail provides an historical and educational walk of one-and-a-half hours in a unique environment.

To visit the 1000 Steps, enter the Dandenong Ranges National Park at the intersection of the Mt Dandenong Tourist Road and the Burwood Highway, Park near the Parks Victoria office and follow the signs to the archway at the start of the track.

Kim Wells



(Mt Cook) group and the photo was taken by Nick Groves.

Wild no 69: in Green Pages on page 25 we said that Bob Mansfield had been

appointed by the Prime Minister to look further at the Government's approvals for Port Hinchinbrook. In fact, Mansfield was asked by the Prime Minister to look at a couple of aspects of the approval process for the project on a confidential basis. In Peter Langtree's article 'Walking a Fine Line' the caption for the photo on page 56 should read: 'Alexander Black's number two primary cairn.' In the headlamps survey on page 91 the two Lago models surveyed were the LO4 (the Ultralight is different and was not surveyed) and the LOX (the Enduro is different and was not surveyed). The listing for US Official Garb & Gear on page 100 in Directories should read: '22a Old Northern Rd, Baulkham Hills, NSW 2153. Ph 1800 674 327'. The telephone number for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award on page 103 in the Classifieds should have been (03) 9412 6685.

QUEENSLAND

● Cave Queensland

The 22nd biennial conference of the Australian Speleological Fed-

eration will be held in Yepoon from 4–8 January next year. Highlights will include a video competition and visits to the nearby Mt Etna karst which was the scene of a long and bitter conservation battle. Information and registration details are available from PO Box 538, Rockhampton, Qld 4700.

Stephen Bunton

NEW SOUTH WALES

● Vision

A symposium entitled 'Visions for a New Millennium', part of a major review of the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service, was held in Sydney from 16–19 July. The review was initiated by State Environment Minister Pam Allan. More than 200 people attended including experts and community groups from Australia and overseas.

In his opening address Premier Bob Carr announced the creation of eight National Parks and significant extensions to another 18 parks. The area of National Parks in NSW has increased by 15 per cent since the election of the Carr Government in 1995. The additions include major extensions to the Blue Mountains National Park, a move likely to be popular with bushwalkers.

In recognition of his efforts in expanding the National Parks system, the Premier was given the Frank Packard award for conservation by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

Outcomes of the review and symposium will be considered by Pam Allan in



completed the first traverse of Yodellers Range in the extreme north in one day. This range is regarded as the most spectacular and outstanding sandstone ridge system in the State and is unequalled for quality rock scrambling. The traverse is often very exposed. The 30 kilometre circuit was completed in 9 hours and 57 minutes. Also, Treseder established a new record of 8 hours and 15 minutes for the Katoomba to Mt Cloudmaker return traverse. He went by way of Narrow Neck, Yellow Pup Ridge, Strongleg Buttress and Dex Creek.

Beth Treseder

● Australian Universities Championships

All university students are eligible to compete in white-water canoeing and trial-mountain biking and rockclimbing events at the Australian Universities Championships in December. Students of all levels of skill and experience are welcome. It will be held at Eildon, Victoria, from 30 November until 4 December. For further information, phone 0419 135 065.

● Corrections and amplifications

Wild no 68: in the Wild Shot caption on page 112, the group is not an Alpine Guides

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Congestion in Pinball Rapid, Mitta Mitta River, Victoria, during the 1998 Winter Classic. Mark Dodswell

the lead-up to the State election in March next year.

Roger Lembit

● Rehabilitation of fire areas

The NPWS has made a major effort to rehabilitate areas affected by bushfires last summer (see *Wild* no 68, page 15). In the Blue Mountains the NPWS spent \$350,000 repairing fire tracks and temporary fire lines built during the emergency. More than 150 kilometres of fire tracks and fire lines have been rehabilitated. The NPWS has also assessed and monitored populations of rare and threatened species affected by the bushfires.

RL

VICTORIA

● Passing of a pioneer

The death of Pat Cardwell (nee Tobias) on 29 January marked the passing of one of Victoria's pioneer skiers and High Country bushwalkers. Born in Harrierville in 1910, Cardwell was associated with Cleve Cole and Mick Hull in the 1930s. Her father, Jim Tobias, was the Harrierville postmaster and took part in building the Mt Feathertop Bungalow which gave its name to the spur.

Wild Diary

Information about rucksack sports events for publication in this department should be sent to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

September			November		
26-27	Glasshouse Trail Run M	Qld (07) 5495 4334	7-8	VCC beginners' and lead-climbing course (week two) RC	Vic (03) 9428 5298
October			8	12-hr Upside-down R	NSW (02) 9541 2508
4	6-hour R	Vic (03) 9735 0574	15	6-hour Metrogain R	Qld (07) 3369 1641
8-10	Snow & Outdoor Trade Show (traders only)	Vic (03) 9879 8677		Socialgain R	ACT (02) 6295 6019
9-11	Basic skills instructor intake C	Vic (03) 9459 4277		Cydogain R	WA (08) 9381 8608
10	12-hour R	WA (08) 9381 8608	21-22	Introductory canoe/kayak course	Vic (03) 9459 4277
10-11	24-hour R ACT Champs	ACT (02) 6295 6019		VCC beginners' and lead-climbing course (week three) RC	Vic (03) 9428 5298
12	Kayak instruction—the basics	NSW (02) 9660 4597	28-29	Basic skills instructor assessment C	Vic (03) 9459 4277
15-16	Basic skills instructor training C	NSW (02) 9660 4597		Basic skills instructor C	NSW (02) 9660 4597
17	Snogain R	NSW (02) 6456 2242		JLW Challenge M	Vic (02) 4576 1668
17-18	River rescue C	Vic (03) 9459 4277	December		
24-25	Introductory canoe/kayak course	Vic (03) 9459 4277	5	8-hour R	Vic (03) 9836 3004
	Basic skills instructor assessment C	NSW (02) 9660 4597	5-6	8- and 24-hour R Tas Champs	Tas (03) 6223 8201
	VCC beginners' and lead-climbing course (week one) RC	Vic (03) 9428 5298	10-11	Inland proficiency training and assessment C	NSW (02) 9660 4597
31	River rescue C	Vic (03) 9459 4277	12-13	Basic skills assessment C	NSW (02) 9660 4597
31-1 Nov	12-hour R SA/Vic Challenge	Vic (03) 9836 3004	26-31	Murray Marathon C	Vic (03) 9685 9999

B bushwalking C canoeing M multisports R rogaining RC rockclimbing S skiing



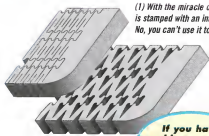
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Standard Long	1130 g	51 x 183 x 3.8 cm	3.0-4.6*
LiteFoam XL	1200 g	63 x 196 x 4 cm	2.8-3.7*

*The tested minimum for sleeping comfort is R-value = 2.

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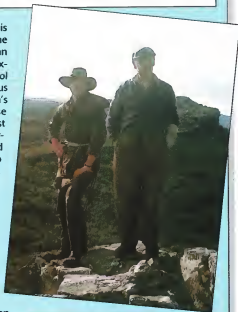


On 13 July John Béchervaise died in his home city of Geelong. Born in 1910, he was one of the few 20th century Australian explorers. A lot of his most significant exploration was done while leading school groups and none ever experienced a serious accident. He led the first ascent of Tasmania's iconic Federation Peak. (Its Tasmanian Plateau is named after him.) He was the first to take a vehicle to Uluru, Northern Territory—the road now follows his tracks—and the first to land on precipitous Rodondo Island, off Wilsons Promontory, Victoria—all with school groups.

For some years he was co-editor of *Walkabout* magazine. He had numerous articles published, including in *Wild*, as well as 19 books. (See his article on the first ascent of Federation Peak in *Wild* no 43, and my article on the Béchervaise-led first ascent of Tower Hill in the Grampians, Victoria, in *Wild* no 60.)

However, Béchervaise was best known for his Antarctic exploration. He was officer in charge of the 1953 Australian Heard Island party, during which he attempted the first ascent of Big Ben (2745 metres). He headed the Mawson Station teams in 1955 and 1959. No one before him had seen Antarctica's huge Prince Charles Mountain Range; the peak he first saw was named *Béchervaise*.

Chris Baxter



Top, a school party including John Béchervaise (third from left) and a youthful Chris Baxter (far right) on the summit of Mt Stirling, Victoria, in 1963. Above, Tim Squire-Wilson (left) and Béchervaise on Tower Hill after the first ascent, Grampians, Victoria. *Baxter*

● Winter Classic

This was held at Mt Hotham and in the Omeo district on 25–26 July. The 15.4 kilometre event combines cross-country skiing, orienteering, road cycling, white-water paddling, mountain running and mountain biking.

The first three individual males were Russell Newnham (9 hours, 59 minutes), Tom Crebbin (10 hours, 5 minutes) and Tom Landon-Smith (10 hours, 11 minutes). The first three individual females were Aina McMasters (12 hours, 10 minutes), Jane Scheer (14 hours, 2 minutes) and Jodie Clarke (18 hours, 15 minutes).

● Wild Publications exhibition

For three weeks in July Telstra hosted an exhibition of Wild Publications magazine front covers and posters in the foyer of its Melbourne building. It was a retrospective spanning some 20 years of publishing and more than 100 issues of *Wild* and *Rock* with the front cover of each issue on display. Also included were all our classic 'wild' posters. The exhibition was well received by Telstra employees and the general public.

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.



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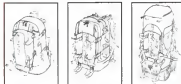
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Finally, the equipment you need may not be the same as you are used to. For example, in the Top End, you never need both a tent and a sleeping bag.

For More Information Contact:

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"You'll never never know, if you never never go."

the wild life

Serendipity

Quentin Chester casts his thoughts on wild waters

serendipity /səˈrɛnˈdɪpəti/ *n.* the faculty of making happy and unexpected discoveries by accident.

Two slender reaches of water glinted in the valley below. The sight took me by surprise. Even from a kilometre away the water looked deep—almost miraculously so. The surface of the pools may have shone like silver but among these dusty, wizened ranges water is gold. It probably hadn't rained here for three months—or longer—yet before my very eyes, in one crook of a

Jackie Wright in a contemplative setting on the Noosa River, Queensland. *Jeff Wright*





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creek, lay more water than you might see in several weeks of searching with a beady gaze or a bit of bent wire.

We had been hoofing it for two days. This was new country to us, or at least an extension of earlier walks. Along the way there had been plenty to catch the eye: thickets in flower, sudden bluffs of sandstone, raptors aloft, even the occasional waterhole to wallow in.

But nothing too bogging; nothing that prepared me for the vision of the pools below. Having walked on ahead, I had time to be a lazy sentry on one of nature's granite battlements. While waiting for the others I took the weight off my blisters, pulled the brim of my hat on to my nose and had unexpected thoughts about the nature of surprise and about Horace Walpole.

It is easy enough to invent a word. Recruiting the right expression to fill an important vacancy in the language is much harder. In 1754 such a coining was documented. The particular word had its origins in an obscure fairy tale describing the travels of three princes who were always making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things which they were not in quest of. The princes hailed from Serendip, an old name for Sri Lanka. When Horace Walpole, one of the busiest cultural magpies of the 18th century, stumbled upon this tale he saw an opportunity. Thus the very meaning of his word *serendipity* is embodied in how it was made.

To my mind such haphazard moments of discovery are among the main attractions of the peripatetic life. Most of us are slaves of habit, meeting our obligations by the hour, by the day, by the week. Yet there is also a part of us that hankers after surprising, erratic and extraordinary things. If you play weekend tennis you may make a quirky, freakish top-spin lob, say, once a month, but most of the game's pleasures are formulaic. By contrast, the act of stepping into little-trodden topography with only a map as your guide holds the promise of so much that is delightfully unforeseen. To find two deep pools where none were expected is edging pretty close to what Horace had in mind.

From under my hat I sniffed the wind and heard footsteps on scree and gaiters brushing spinifex. As the others arrived, I rose from my resting-place and gestured with mock grandeur to the water below. 'Check it out', I said. For the next few minutes we all stared at our unexpected oasis. A mob of galahs shrieked among the lanky river gums. Belonging to a species no less social we, too, babbled away, indulging in that human reflex to give places a voice.

By the time we dropped off the ridge and began to weave our way upstream there were lots of voices. For it soon became evident that this was no ordinary creek. The entire watercourse was carved out of stone. We trotted along terraces of polished rock. Often our path was blocked by gargantuan boulders, some the size of delivery vans. And it seemed that at each bend in the creek there was another astonishing waterfall or deep pool.

In 20 years of walking around these parts I'd not seen anything like this. These rock holes were not the usual dinky puddles but cavernous troughs, brimming and emerald. Every few strides something overturned my expectations: lush reed beds, a grey heron, waterlilies bobbing in shallows and families of striped fish cruising the dappled depths. I couldn't believe my eyes. It was as though we had taken a wrong turn and ended up on the other side of the continent in some tropical Shangri-La.

After a few years of knocking about the bush it's easy to lapse into a been-there-done-that-seen-it-all frame of mind. But every now and then you happen upon a place that breaks the frame. This little lost world—which, for the purposes of this tale, shall remain anonymous—revived feelings that had long been buried. And so it was that our conversation skittered between elation and whimsy, honest amazement and high flippancy. In the babbling confusion of our discoveries we were like teenagers again: four self-styled princes in their own, outback Serendip.

We lounged and lunched by a crater-like pool, a breeze hustling across the water. Already there was talk of return trips and of all the people we thought should see this bewitching place. However, when the chatter eventually subsided and the others dozed off, I began to have my doubts. It is one thing to uncover marvels but what of this urge to share our findings? We blab to friends, take holiday snaps and write letters; some people—heaven forbid—even spill the beans in magazine stories. In giving public we put at risk the spark of discovery. To arrive at something you have already heard about is hardly serendipity, especially if there is a queue.

Horace Walpole not only dabbled in wordsmithing, he was also a demon with the quill. During his lifetime he dashed off no fewer than 4000 letters. They occupy more than 40 hefty volumes. Even for the swiftest mind, sustaining such an outpouring of news and ideas takes time.

It is perhaps not surprising to learn that Walpole was comfortably off, single, sickly and somewhat shy. He had a wide circle of acquaintances but few close friends. Apart from his letters, Walpole is most remembered for his house, Strawberry Hill. Over four decades, Horrie turned a modest cottage into his sprawling, private castle or nately decorated in the Gothic style. At every turn there were battlements and pinnacles, arches and fretwork. The house was festooned with portraits, trophies, sculptures and antiques. It was a shrine to his curious, fanciful life.

The problem for Walpole was his growing celebrity, accentuated of course by the way he avidly broadcast news of his life and times—and his house—through his tireless correspondence. Soon Strawberry Hill became so overrun with stickybeaks that the delicate air of mystery and surprise he was trying to create was lost in the hubbub. In the end, he made visitors apply for tickets in advance.

Quentin Chester

(see Contributors in *Wild* no 3) writes regularly about going bush. He is the co-author of the *Outdoor Companion*, *The Kimberley—Horizons of Stone* and *Australia's Wild Islands*. His most recent book, *The Wild Calling*, includes several stories that first appeared in this column.



Having a horde of freeloaders traipsing through your own kitsch castle is one thing. But if the place in question is a patch of wild bush, the price of fame might be much higher. A few inadvertent remarks while under the influence or a careless rave on the Internet and before you know it the place is crawling with youth groups and rosy-cheeked bushwalkers.

If the real estate involved gets enough publicity you end up with a World Heritage Area tourist destination, bitumen highways and scenic helicopter flights on the hour. A couple of years down the track there is a \$3 million multimedia, interactive, interpretative visitor centre. This is to entertain patrons of the award-winning, ecologically sensitive, 170-room high-rise resort which features an endangered local mammal tastefully embossed on its disposable cutlery.

Of course, it could be worse. As we pressed on up the creek, weaving through more block-strewn corridors and past shimmering pools, I thought of Tasmania's Lake Pedder, once a world unto itself—a serendipitous place if ever there was one—but a lake no more, drowned by the stroke of a pen.

So, tempting as it was to imagine this valley and its surrounds might best be saved by keeping it out of sight, I knew that it had no protection under the laws of the land. It had not been set aside, reserved or proclaimed. There was no practical reason why I might not wake one day to the news that a government had, in its ignorance or cupidity, signed a contract setting aside this 'underutilised site' for ore extraction, military manoeuvres or waste relocation.

Although a sad witness to how some people behave in National Parks, I'm yet to be convinced by cynical arguments that such areas should never have been made



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public in the first place. Secrets have a habit of dying with their owners. So I guess that one day I'll carefully try to tell the story of this creek in the hope that if more people know of it, it is less likely to be neglected or abused.

But not now, I thought to myself. I'm not ready to spill the beans just yet. Even after six hours of steady rock hopping the surprises kept on coming. Whenever it seemed that there was a pattern to the creek's twists and turns, something new became visible to confound our predictions; a major tributary snaking off into another small kingdom of stone or a waterhole out of which rose a sheer wall of firm, red rock—the kind that makes any climber's palms moisten with anticipation.

In the end it was all too much. Making the most of discoveries, even modest ones, takes time. We were serendipit out. On dusk a waterfall appeared, with rocks of polished granite glowing ruddy in the last blush of light. At its base spread a wide pool encircled by the outstretched limbs of river gums. Although behind schedule we decided it was time to ease up, time to make camp on an inviting, sandy bank.

As darkness wrapped around us the flames from our fire cast shadows like dancing puppets on to the walls of the natural amphitheatre. The wind rushed past, the branches rattled. The mood was positively neolithic. I half expected that if I looked away from the glowing coals I might see a crocodile haul itself out of the dark water and come swaggering across the sand.

Later, in the confines of my tent, I was already plotting my return. It would be different, of course. Serendipity never strikes twice. I also knew that 'discoveries' are hardly commonplace in this day and age. Not many people stumble across unknown rivers and mountain ranges while out for a ramble. The truth of the matter is that we are spoilt in this country. There are so many little, lost worlds out there waiting for those with the will to find them.

I consoled myself that reprise is the flip side to surprise. Going back allows anticipation and memory to do their stuff. Even if a place is familiar in outward form, surprises of the imagination—making accidental connections, odd leaps—can be just as powerful as the shock of the new.

In addition to his house renovations and brimming out-tray, Walpole is also remembered for a small novel. *The Castle of Otranto* is an action-packed, medieval melodrama, full of concealed identities, subterranean vaults, necromancy and supernatural incidents. The castle described is Strawberry Hill writ large and even more weird. It is a reminder that there is nothing so Gothic as the human mind and that serendipity can just as easily be found within as without.

Queenie Chamber

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Quick fixes

Repairs in the field, by *John Chapman*



The bush can be a tough environment for lightweight outdoors equipment and no matter how careful you are there will come a time when you will need to make repairs on a trip. Some of the problems I have experienced are sleeping-bags spilling down, zips breaking, holes torn in my pack and a large hole forming in a canoe. While such problems can be serious if they are not solved, with a bit of foresight and improvisation you should be able to continue the trip.

You might think that this article only applies to very experienced walkers when their gear becomes old and begins to wear out. That is not the case. When you are learning you are more likely to use borrowed or rented equipment, or maybe you purchased a cheaper item which is

more likely to fail. Rented equipment often has problems as there isn't a caring owner to look after it. In my first bush-walking years I gained lots of experience fixing failing equipment.

BEFORE THE TRIP

If your pretrip planning is poor, you will not have the resources to fix much gear.

The most obvious step before you leave is to inspect your gear to make certain that you are not taking a known problem into the field with you. It is always easier to repair gear before a trip. Inspect stitching, buckles and zips. Have a good look at your footwear before you apply waterproofing agents—broken stitches and other imperfections are easier to see on dry boots.

Sometimes tent-pegs are not equal to the task, Western Arthur Range, Tasmania. *John Chapman*

Inspect packs carefully; the frames as well as the buckles. If you have borrowed a tent, erect it at home—this will prevent you from taking the wrong poles (it does happen!). Use a check-list and ensure that you have everything on it—I once took two pairs of overpants on a two-week trip thinking that one pair was a jacket!

The other pretrip task is to decide what 'first aid' you will carry for your equipment. Most people think of first aid in terms of people but first aid for your gear is important too. You cannot be prepared for every problem but you can plan for likely events.

You might need to do three major types of equipment repairs. One is repairing material; a heavy-duty needle, ten metres of thread and a thimble will solve most problems. Don't forget the thimble as it is very difficult and dangerous to push a thick needle through a pack without it.

The second concerns metal. The real problem with metal is that it can be very difficult to fix without the right tools. Look at your gear and assess its weak points.

A spare tent pole or a section of a thicker pole is extremely handy for fixing a broken tent pole. If your pack uses bolts, buy and carry a spare—you will be very glad of it if you lose one. I also carry some copper rivets for temporary joins, some washers for spreading load around a failing stress point and some soft copper wire and paper-clips for binding parts together. A good Swiss Army knife or a multitool such as a Leatherman can provide some tools for repairing metal.

The third requires gluing. Small tubes of Araldite can be very helpful when skiing, along with a spare ski-pole basket. If you are canoeing, you should carry a full kit for repairing fibreglass. For many temporary repairs—particularly for plastic canoes and kayaks—electrical duct tape is the most common 'glue' used and is often very effective.

A spare hip-belt buckle and at least ten metres of tent guy cord form the basis of the rest of my spares. I carry most of these items in a tin the size of a jam jar. This also contains other things such as a set of emergency matches, a sharp blade, spare torch globes and batteries.

DURING THE TRIP

To prevent a problem is always better than a field repair, so use your gear carefully. Outdoors equipment is amazingly robust at times yet you quickly discover its fragility when it is used the wrong way.

Store all gear inside your pack; articles tied to the outside are easily lost or damaged. I have seen walkers lose tent poles, tents, rain-jackets and foam mats. Such losses are avoided by storing gear inside. If the pack is too small, consider getting a larger one.

Tent poles are among the last items packed and many people put them on the outside. I always store them inside. To prevent damage to sleeping-bags, for example, I first slide my hand down the inside of my pack thus creating a space into which to slide the poles.

When you put your pack down in a busy area where others are walking, do the waist-belt up by threading it through the shoulder-straps. This lifts the buckles off the ground and reduces the chances of breaking a buckle by standing on it. Do not undo buckles on pack loads. Rather, extend the tape to its maximum; you will be able to open the pack and the buckles are less likely to be damaged as

Inspect your gear before a bushwalking trip





they do not dangle loosely. You can crack buckles by standing on them and you may not notice that they are damaged until you put the pack on while it is loaded and a buckle explodes.

In addition, avoid sitting on packs with internal frames. The frames are only soft aluminium bars that are easily bent into uncomfortable shapes. You can also burst zips when you put extra pressure on a compartment.

Be cautious around tents—most good tents can survive any storm but they break easily if you trip and fall on them.

EMERGENCY FIXES

Even when you do the right thing, your gear will sometimes fail. Failed footwear is one of the most disastrous gear failures—you really need sound footwear. In Tasmania I have walked with someone who decided to try bare feet; he lasted three days, then it took another five days waiting for his feet to recover sufficiently so that he could walk out. He later realised that it was a bad idea to ditch his failed boots.

On another trip a sole completely fell off one of my boots. I solved this by wrapping several metres of tent guy cord around the boot, thus holding the sole on. Of course, the cord wore quickly on the edges so every few hours I untied it and moved it around so that a different part of the cord wore. By the end of a week that cord had a lot of knots but it did get me through the trip and kept my feet protected.

Broken tent poles are a common problem. If you have a pole sleeve, just slide it over and tape into place. An alternative is to bind a stick across the break using tape. A dead stick might seem best but this may snap too easily

and I have found that a green stick does a much better job as it's more flexible.

Sometimes a broken tent-pole can be moved to a less critical place. You can cut the shock-cord in poles—it's only there to make the tent easier to put up. Once tent poles are under load the shock-cord is not needed. If a pole is cracked, electrical tape wrapped around it or some copper wire often provides enough reinforcement.



A stitch in time. David Noble. Opposite, an improvised camp-site. Glenn Tempest

If you lose your tent-pegs, you will have to use natural materials instead. Sticks often work well for pegs. You can also tie peg points to loose rocks (a spare guy cord is handy) and in exposed localities you might use both—a stick with a rock on top of it. Frequently pegs do not work very well in marshy ground or snow and a better method is to tie a short rope to the middle of a stick, then use rocks or snow to bury or hold it down. Plastic bags filled with snow are also very effective peg points in snow.

If you lose your waterproof jacket, sacrifice your pack liner (often a garbage bag) by cutting holes in it and using it as a temporary rain-jacket. While it will never be as good and should not be used in scrub as it will tear easily, it could mean the difference between getting out safely and risking exposure.

The same goes for gloves—plastic bread-bags and socks are good replacements; they are as warm as gloves but not as comfortable because they have a tendency to slide off. An elastic band around the wrist solves the sliding problem.

Torn tents and damaged packs are serious problems. There are no quick fixes. It takes hours to stitch by hand but then, you do have time in the bush. With large tears in tents there is sometimes too much stress for stitching alone to work. Careful placement of multiple lengths of rope across the torn panel connecting guy and peg points can take the heavy stress load. Wide, electrical tape placed across the tear can keep the weather out.

Every tent is different and if your tent fails, you will need a major reassessment—usually you will have to abandon your trip as soon as possible.

If you damage a sleeping-bag, put some really sticky tape across the damaged seams. Electrical tape does not work well and I have used Elastoplast or Leukoplast from the first aid kit with great success.

When looking for repair materials do not ignore the first aid kit. The really sticky tapes can be used for adhering to cloth; safety pins are great for holding broken zips and pack harnesses together; and ointments such as sunscreen can be used as lubricants. If you have a dry, rubber O-ring on your stove or a corroded zip, some lubricant can make a real difference. It might smell strange but if it works you will not care too much about that.

AFTER THE TRIP

It is easy to forget to attend to your gear at the end of a long drive home. Boots should be dried, any damp gear should be aired and all cooking equipment needs a good cleaning to prevent corrosion.

I always remember to air equipment but seldom inspect it carefully and when I next look at it I have forgotten what caused problems. An idea that works for me is to keep a short list of things I need to fix or replace after the trip.

Often the list only shows old items that need replacing but the list can also suggest additions or changes to the original check-list.

Gear failures are rarely the same and undoubtedly you will come up against other problems. However, with some basic items and careful thought you will be able to solve most problems so that you can at least continue your trip. Field repairs are part of the outdoors experience. Making a good field repair can provide a sense of satisfaction and improve your confidence in being self-reliant.

John Chapman (see Contributors in *Wild no 1*) is one of Australia's most widely travelled and respected bushwalking writers. He is particularly well known for his books of Tasmanian track notes.

Basic repair kit for bushwalking

- heavy-duty needle
- thread
- thimble
- spare tent pole (or section of pole)
- pocket knife or multitool
- copper rivets
- washers
- soft copper wire
- paper-clips
- spare cord
- spare shoelaces
- electrical duct tape
- spare hip-belt buckle
- garbage bags

The Early Days

Bushwalking legend *John Siseman*
introduces Victoria's first alpine bushwalkers



A 1930s party at Bryce's Hut. Photo IO/Nicholls


Among the first recreational walkers to penetrate into the Victorian Alps were two miners, James and John Manfield, who in 1854 climbed from the Buckland valley to the Horn on Mt Buffalo. Impressed by what they saw, they generated sufficient interest among the local townspeople and farmers to undertake further expeditions to the striking granite cliffs and tors, the snow-grass plains and the splendid views of the surrounding peaks.

A few years later a local doctor founded the Bright Alpine Club, dedicated to exploring the alpine regions around the north-east Victorian town. Primarily concerned with the Buffalo Plateau and instrumental in the events that led to the creation of the Mt Buffalo National Park in 1898, the club members also turned their attention to the higher peaks of Mt Hotham, Mt Feathertop and the Bogong High Plains. BAC members made the first winter ascent of Mt Feathertop in 1890 and achieved the first winter ascent of the Horn on Mt Buffalo the following year. Thus it is probably a fair assumption that the members of the BAC, many of them professional men from Melbourne, formed the cradle of recreational walking within Victoria.

Early this century bushwalkers seemed to have developed a preoccupation with the Baw Baws, possibly because of their accessibility and proximity to Melbourne. As early as 1906 the government oversaw the construction of a walking track across 80 kilometres of rugged mountain terrain from Walhalla to the Yarra Track and from there to Warburton. Two huts were later built along the Baw

Baw Tourist Track, each with cooking utensils and mattresses; a tourist map showing Warburton, Mt Baw Baw and Walhalla was produced; and a third hut was added in the 1930s. Between the first journey over the Baw Baw track in 1907 and the dreadful bushfires of 1939 it was the most respected and, at the same time, the most abused walking track in Victoria. A walker of the day describes the track as 'the graveyard of hikers' hopes' while another, Robert Croll, eloquently writes: 'This is the track on which many novices metaphorically lay their bones. For some reason it has caught the popular fancy, with the result that the budding walker, in all the discomfort of improper equipment, frequently makes it his first, and last, essay with the swag.'

John Siseman



Born in London, John Siseman has explored the high mountains of Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales since arriving in Australia in the late 1950s. The knowledge thus gained has proliferated into a number of useful bushwalking guides. He has trekked in the high Himalayas between bouts of employment in a Melbourne gear shop.

A contemporary photograph depicts a Baw Baw walking party setting out along the track in dark twill suits, stiff collars and boaters, with baskets slung off a stick over the shoulder. Perhaps it was with this last image in mind that JK Jensen and colleague set out in February 1907. The first walkers to explore the newly opened Yarra Track, they exhibited a delightful disregard for the need of any equipment, faking instead: '...some sandwiches in our haversack; these were intended for lunch, tea and breakfast the following morning. We would be at Walhalla for lunch on the second day! It was only 51 miles [82 kilometres] and we can easily do that in a day and a half.' After eating most of their sandwiches that evening, they spent a cold and miserable night; their only shelter consisted of a few sheets of brown

paper, they suffered from lack of water as well as from hunger. A fortuitous find of a bag containing some mouldy bread and, later, some potatoes left by earlier travellers sustained them for a second, unscheduled night in the bush before being welcomed into Walhalla, the harbingers of the tourist traffic that was going to revive the dying gold town.



Jealousy over Mrs Klingsporn, pictured here at her Delattie River property in 1925 with legendary walker Bill Waters, was reputedly the cause of the infamous Wonnangatta Station murders in 1917. All uncredited photos Alex Trahair collection

The early bushwalker was made of stern stuff and seemed to pay scant regard to the need for adequate gear. One walker set out at Easter 1914, equipped with a disreputable-looking sugar bag which contained food supplies while his companion shoul-

dered a pack of indescribable shape with luxuries that included Worcester sauce, olive oil and a tincture of quinine. Camping out in pouring rain, their blankets did not provide any protection. Lightweight tents had yet to come on to the scene. At Easter 1917 pioneer bushwalkers Bill Waters and Len Cook came across 60 centimetres of fresh snow on the Baw Baw Plateau. Experienced in the ways of the bush, these two men would have been well equipped by the standards of the time. But other parties still favoured sugar bags filled with potatoes



Albert Biggs, left, and Jack Hearn north of Mt Clear in November 1924.

and beer, chaff bags crammed with bread or they carried their gear in kerosene cans; one pushed a loaded wheelbarrow and another couple carried their food and gear slung from a long pole between their shoulders; yet another party rode (or pushed) loaded bicycles. Equipment selection still had a long way to go.

When I began bushwalking in the late 1950s I was the proud owner of an A-frame pack with a capacity of about half of today's monsters. The A-frame pack was designed to hang off your back, forcing you to lean forward uncomfortably, leather straps cutting into shoulders. Coming into general use in the 1930s, my A-frame pack probably represented the pinnacle of pack design at that time. A few years later we set new standards with our H-frame packs, which enabled us to carry greater loads with a little more comfort. These packs were immensely bet-

Clyde Grant, left, and Charles Bryant looking into the Terrible Hollow in 1926.



Alex Trahair

Portrait of a pioneer, by Lachlan Drummond

One of the early walkers in the Victorian Alps, Alex Trahair was a friend and compatriot of many pioneers including Bill Waters, Robert Croll, the Bryce family of Wonnangatta Station, the Lovicks, the Frys and others famous in the Alps. Few today are old enough to have known such people, let alone call them friends. Aged 92, Trahair is one of the very few early Victorian Alps bushwalkers still alive.

Born in 1906, he developed a love for the bush from an early age. His first job, in 1923, was with Melbourne wholesale drapers Patterson, Lang & Bruce. Not long after his appointment Trahair was informed by Stanley Bruce (later to become Prime Minister) that the firm had underpaid him. As compensation he was given £8 and three weeks holiday. During that holiday he paid one of his early visits to the mountains—a long walk from Healesville, near Melbourne, to Mt Buffalo.

Trahair belonged to the Melbourne Walking Club for many years and would often walk with fellow members or on his own. With Waters of the MWC he made the first crossing of the 'dry' Barry Mountains in 1926. (See 'Across the Barry Mountains', *Wild* no 31.) Every night they were forced to descend 650 metres into gullies with their billies to search for water, sometimes without luck. On completing the crossing the walkers celebrated with a bottle of beer (warm!) which they had carried across the Barries; it was New Year's Eve 1926. Even today a walk across the Barry Mountains is a difficult and potentially dangerous trip but in those days it was truly a pioneering achievement.

Today many walkers take the tracks and the widely available, high-quality maps of the High Country for granted. But for the early pioneers such navigation aids were far less common, if available at all. Yet Trahair became lost in the bush only once, during the notorious 1939 Victorian High Country

fires when, to his amazement, he noticed that the sun was setting in the east! The smoke had disoriented him and made navigation difficult. After quick consideration in that dangerous situation Trahair gave 'Etty'—the packhorse—a whack on the buttocks and waited for the horse to head in what he hoped was the right direction. After following Etty, Trahair soon found his bearings.

Trahair's most frequent excursion into the mountains was from Mansfield by way of Mt Buller, Mt Howitt and the Wonnangatta valley to 'Eaglevale' near Dargo. He made this trip, or slight variations of it, dozens of times, often alone or with fellow walkers or mountain cattlemen. On one such occasion he became snowed in on Mt Speculation for ten days. Looking back on these pioneering adventures he concedes that some of his expeditions were 'bloody foolish', especially the solo trips into remote country, of which there were many.

When asked about his favourite mountain Trahair names Mt Howitt without hesitation and quotes Robert Henderson Croll from his book *Along the Track*, published in 1930. Croll was a long-time president of the MWC and an eloquent and prolific early author on the Australian bush.

Rarer grew the air and scarcer the timber; the flowers changed to the long-stemmed violets, the white and purple asters, the quaint grevillias and golden everlasting of the uplands, but the crest of this sheer-sided Howitt which we were climbing looked as remote as ever.

Trahair supplied many of the photos for Croll's book *The Open Road in Victoria*, published in 1928. (For those with an interest in early writings on the Australian bush, with some effort Croll's books can be found in second-hand bookshops.)

In 1920 Croll introduced Trahair to Harry Smith, a well-known High Country personality. For decades Smith had lived on the lonely Wonnangatta River at 'Eaglevale', south of Wonnangatta Station. Trahair and Smith became close friends. In 1917 Smith discovered the body of one of the victims of the infamous Wonnangatta Station double murder and helped police with their investigations. No one was ever convicted of the murders. However, Smith, who died in 1947 (reputedly aged 99), was thought to have known who the murderers were and confided their identities to Trahair; a secret he has kept to this day. (During one of Trahair's last trips to the mountains, in 1990, he was invited to 'Eaglevale' to open Smith's restored hut and unveil a commemorative plaque.)

Trahair's recollections of the early history of the Victorian Alps are both accurate and fascinating. It is a delight to hear him speak with such love and knowledge of the mountains. He is referred to extensively in Croll's books, in early editions of *The Melbourne Walker*, and, more recently, in Wallace Mortimer's books *The History of Wonnangatta Station* and *Wonnangatta Station—the next 25 years*.

Lachlan Drummond has walked extensively throughout Australia including in the Victorian Alps. He worked in outdoors retail for a number of years before joining the staff at *Wild* in 1996. His favourite thing is to watch the sunset over the Australian bush.



An historic photo of Jack Bryce of Wonnangatta Station, left, and 19-year-old Trahair at the station in November 1924.

ter than the swags carried by our predecessors in the 1920s for whom a pack of any sort was an expensive luxury. They made do with an adaptation of the traditional swag—tent, blankets, clothing and food rolled into a canvas groundsheet and lashed on to their backs by two shoulder-straps, with small bags called 'shebas' carried on their chests for extra gear and food. Often there weren't any maps to be had and those few that were available seemed to have been created by cartographers without qualifications other than a rough hand and a vivid imagination. Getting lost, at least for a short time, was a way of life but it was often the way in which new gems were discovered.

Tents, if you had one, were particularly basic. Even as late as the 1960s we did not have the need for luxuries such as sewn in floors, double skins, insect netting, zips on the doors; not even poles or pegs were thought necessary. A light cotton tent tied between two convenient trees and attached to rocks or shrubs with guys was all that was needed to keep out the elements. It goes without saying that it only kept them out on a fine, mosquito-free night; but it was such a tent that accompanied me on some of my greatest walks.

As motorised transport became more readily available and the road network extended into the mountains, walkers were able to focus attention further afield. In this age of fast cars and superhighways, it is easy to overlook the difficulties a visit into the Victorian Alps entailed. Until the late 1950s there were very few roads that actually penetrated into the alpine regions and walking groups had to rely on cattle- and mining tracks winding through the foothills to reach the higher peaks they sought. In order to lighten their swags,

bushwalkers of the 1920s and 1930s took to using packhorses, provided by the mountain cattlemen whose knowledge of the mountains was essential in an age before maps. Then, as now, the cattlemen's huts were welcome shelters in the mountains and their homes, too, were always open to the passing walker at a time when the roads ended well short of the high country.

Between the two World Wars skiing began to take hold on a small but dedicated group of enthusiasts. The pioneers of skiing had to be bushwalkers; few roads came anywhere near the snowfields and there weren't any comfortable, heated lodges or mechanised ski tows—if you wanted to ski down a hill, you



Jack Hearn, left, at Millers Hut in 1924.

had to climb it first. And for this you needed the combined skills of the bushwalker, the cross-country skier and the downhill skier. Many of the exploratory bushwalks undertaken at this time were primarily to discover new venues for winter tours and to place food in position for winter-trips. The persistence shown in this search was endless. One pair of enthusiasts, seeing snow on mountains north of Maffra, set off one weekend in the mid-1930s in a single-seater car described as 'having seen better days'. Travelling over disgraceful roads, including one section with only the original foot track, they camped overnight before proceeding the next day. They abandoned the car at the foot of a steep pinch and continued on foot, arriving finally at Mt Useful to find that the snow had melted. After walking on further still, the undertaking was finally forsaken with the verdict, 'unsuitable because of heavy timber'.

Other winter expeditions to the mountains were more productive. In July 1926 the first east-west crossing of the Bogong High Plains was accomplished; the party climbed from 'Shannonvale' only to become stormbound for three days at Fitzgeralds Hut. After the weather cleared they were able to cross the High Plains, descending to the shelter of Dibbins Hut. The skiers including pioneer skiers Robert Wilkinson, Gerald Rush, Eddie Robinson and Kemble Gibson finally arrived at Mt Hotham to be greeted by a newspaper reporter because a rumour had been spread that they were lost. The following year Gibson, Robinson, Eric Stewart and Waters crossed the Bogong High Plains from west to east. They started at Mt Hotham and descended to Blairs Hut, where to their dismay they found a note from cattleman Frank Blair stating that he had been



Bindaree Hut, on the upper Hovagwa River, on New Year's Day 1926.

Victorian Alps

▲ 30 60 90 km Not for navigation.



unable to bring packhorses in through abnormally deep snow further down the valley. The four decided to push on, subsisting on 'an insipid diet of boiled rice for the next three days'.

The next challenge was to ski Mt Bogong—Victoria's highest peak—and the ascent was duly

Howitt, Stirling and Buller; the Bluff—and other peaks not so well known, the golden days finally coming to an abrupt halt with the outbreak of the Second World War. After the war, the sport of skiing took a different direction as commercial interests entered the field and brought change both to the sport and the mountains on which it was practised.

In case you get the impression that bushwalking in the Alps was an all-male affair, the women of the day were not left behind. Although segregation seems to have been the rule, women walkers were by no



A 1925 photo of the blaze that gave Stanley's Name Spruce its name.



Trahair at Lake Tali Karng in January 1926.

made in the winter of 1928 by the same foursome. Starting out from 'Shannonvale', they first skied across Mt Nelse before dropping into the Big River valley from Timms Lookout. The next day dawned fine and the four friends were able to reach the summit before returning the way they had come. Further ski trips were made throughout the 1930s; to Mts Clear,

means unheard of. The early visitors to Mt Buffalo in the 1880s relied on local guides to take them into the hills and among the best and most popular was Alice Manfield, James's daughter—known as Guide Alice—who, with her extensive knowledge of the mountain, its wildlife and vegetation, gave considerable pleasure to the parties she led on to the plateau. Others were blazing their own trails into the mountains from as early as 1909 when three women completed a walk from Warburton to Alexandra by way of Matlock and Woods Point. Staying each night at an accommodation house or hotel, an important part of the trio's planning was the dress basket in which extra, more seemingly clothing was forwarded by coach from Melbourne and delivered each day to their destination.

Like their male counterparts, women bushwalkers had to make do with whatever they could lay their hands on in the way of equipment; sleeping rough on the ground under a starlit sky. By the 1920s, pushing deeper into the mountains and with the aid of packhorses, women walkers visited Lake Tali Karng and the Bogong High Plains—at a time when such places must have seemed as remote as the moon to many of their less adventurous, city-bound sisters. Considering the difficulties imposed on them

by the society of the day only brave women would challenge the male dominance of their sport, yet they were able to equal anything undertaken by the menfolk.

The packhorse made possible a significant broadening of outdoors adventures when Maurice Harkins, a senior officer of the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau, promoted walking and horse-riding holidays in the Victorian Alps during the Christmas holidays. These 'Skyline Tours' were conducted by cattlemen he had met while walking. Precursor of today's commercial tours, the Skyline Tours were all-male trips that were popular throughout the 1930s and covered some impressive routes before being brought to a halt by the Second World War. The 1938 Skyline Tour went by train to Sale, from there

journey to Sale utilising the useful, discounted hikers' return ticket that allowed an outward journey on one line and a return on another. At the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau I had unknowingly purchased these from the same Maurice Harkins of the Skyline Tours and he concernedly asked how I was going to get from Sale to Wangaratta. I said that I was going to walk through the mountains. Harkins then proceeded to advise me about the difficulties that lay between the two railheads but I, with the brashness of youth and considering him too old to know anything worthwhile about the bush, indicated that it was none of his business where I went and took my tickets and my leave. In later years I have often regretted that I did not listen to him, for he would have had much of interest to impart.



An historic photo of Harry Smith, left, and Charles Bryant at Smith's property 'Eaglecote' on the Wonnangatta River in 1926. It was Smith who raised the alarm about the Wonnangatta Station murders in 1917.

by horse or foot to Briangolong, the Crooked River and the Wonnangatta valley; then on to Mt Howitt and the Crosscut Saw, the Buffalo River and the Dandongadale River to Wangaratta before returning to Melbourne by rail. The entire trip was advertised with 'all inclusive fares, first class rail travel, a saddle and sure footed, mountain-bred horses for riders, sleeping bags, blankets and tents, meals by a competent cook, guides and packhorses for baggage'. All this for the princely sum of £9 10s (\$19) for walkers or £12 10s (\$25) for riders!

In the summer of 1960 I retraced the above Skyline Tour but without the luxury of packhorse support. Although we didn't realise it at the time we were to be among the last bushwalkers to see the Alps before the plethora of roads and four-wheel-drive tracks swept through the mountains, bringing with it ever-increasing numbers of visitors and irrevocably changing the nature of the hills for all time. As did the 1938 Skyline Tour, our walk began with a rail

By 1960 a taxi instead of a horse took us to the Crooked River near Dargo, where the mountain folk at the homestead at the end of the road expected us to take afternoon tea. There still weren't any roads from this river north to the Dandongadale River—only the mining- and cattle tracks that had been used for the last 100 years. These we followed into Talbotville where the old miners' cottages and store had not yet been vandalised; across Wombat Spur to the magical Wonnangatta valley, unsullied by vehicles and where we feasted on cherries from the orchard at the old homestead; and up the Dry River track to Mt Howitt, still with patches of snow left from the previous winter. We traversed the Crosscut Saw which had barely a foot-pad, let alone track markers and signs warning that you were about to enter a wilderness zone. In comparison with today, virtually the entire alpine region of Victoria was wilderness. I wonder what those first bushwalkers would make of it all. ●

Ridges and Rainforest

North-east Tasmania is a unique as well as an uncrowded bushwalking experience, by *Michael Manhire*



Most bushwalkers who visit Tasmania race off to the South-west to join the queues along the Western Arthurs and on Federation Peak.

Looking for more peaceful days we went to some of the lesser known country of north-eastern Tasmania, the rugged land beyond the great Ben Lomond plateau. Not often visited by walkers—but frequently by the loggers—there is some fine mountain country with rocky gorges, waterfalls and forest reserves.

North eastern Tasmania's 'Western Arthurs' are tucked away among the rugged country east of Ben Lomond with some tricky and occasionally unpleasant little ridges. Best known is Mt Victoria whose rocky skyline rises above rainforest for all to see. But there are others not so obvious. Covered in thick bush you wouldn't know most of them were there at first glance. They just look like

forested hills. This is what makes them unexpected discoveries and hard going.

Our first visit was to the ridges north of the Fingal valley. We left the Fingal valley road at Avoca and climbed to Rossarden, the old mining town lying on the slopes of Ben Lomond, and followed the road past the turn-off to Storys Creek. The cliffs of Sphinx Bluff, Bent Bluff, Broken Bluff and Pavement Bluff towered above, a spectacular dolente escarpment. Stacks Bluff, the highest peak at this end of Ben Lomond, lies further west and was now out of sight. All this country is State Forest, much of it regrowth and it is reserved for logging. For what else would forest be reserved in Tasmania?

We found two, good, day walks on a couple of rocky and forested ridges, Byatts Razorback and Tower Hill. Fanatics might do both in one long walk with an overnight

Richea scoparia on the Ben Lomond plateau. Right, Tranquil Tarn and the southern escarpment of the Ben Lomond plateau. *Robert McMahon*

camp but the country between them, which is traversed by O'Tooles and Fonthill Roads, does not offer much incentive for campers.

Byatts Razorback

We started on Three O'Clock Hill, about ten kilometres north-east of Rossarden and accessible on logging roads. The 'Hill' is a rocky pyramid covered in dense bush, as are all these hills, and about 950 metres high. There are no tracks so it is just a matter of struggling uphill through the bush to the top. If you have selected the right hill you will reach the summit.



The Ben Lomond plateau fills the western horizon although we did not see it distinctly until we reached the top of Byatts Razorback. Ben Lomond is named after one of Scotland's best-known mountains where, says the song, 'the wee birdies sing, the wild flowers spring, and the sun shines bright on Loch Lomond'. Where they have not been decimated by the loggers, there are birdies and flowers here, too, and probably the sun shines more often on Tasmania's Ben Lomond. Once thought to be Tassie's highest mountain, it actually ranks second, but the extensive plateau is by far the greatest area of high ground in the State.

Think twice about wearing shorts here. It was a hot day when we came up and I wore them. It was certainly cooler but the cost was scratched and battered knees as I

distant horizon Mt Victoria and Mt Albert, both named in the last century after the queen and her consort. North-east lies West Tower, the western part of Tower Hill; the eastern summit was hidden by the trees in front of us. The forested slopes were varied not only by the delightful Tyne valley far below but by the patchwork of bare hillsides where the loggers had been at work. We struggled on to the end of the ridge, battling thick scrub, fallen trees and abundant rocks before returning along the ridge to drop steeply off the western end to pick up an old track to return to the car. Tower Hill was about three kilometres away but with a deep valley and thick forest we could not reach it and return in one day. The old road was luxury after fighting the unforaging bush above.

mountains over 1100 metres high. We followed its instructions and found them accurate and helpful so at least one other person must have ventured here before us.

We headed down through cool, beautiful forest; it was easy going—seemed it would be a doddle—to the col, where we picked up the remains of an overgrown logging track which ended at an old, rusty stake. The West Tower is a ridge about half a kilometre in length with the highest part near the western end. Heading uphill from the stake took us to the foot of the ridge, where we found a gully which led to the top. And a cairn, too! We must be in the right place. Having attained the ridge it seemed silly to abandon it so we ignored the instructions and stayed high, reasoning that the ridge must lead to the top. It would have done, too, had we been able to stay on it. After battling the scrub for an hour without making much progress we were confronted by steep drops on three sides, not very high but definitely too high to fall from. Forced to admit that the guidebook writers knew best we headed back and scrambled down from the ridge to where they had told us to go in the first place.



Mt Albert from near the summit of Mt Victoria. Near right, echidna. Far right, serpentine Ralph Falls, near Mt Victoria. Michael Manhire

battled through thick bush. We reached Three O'Clock Hill at 11 o'clock (four hours earlier than we should have, perhaps?) and descended to the saddle where the forest is more open before emerging below the south-western end of Byatts Razorback, a rocky knoll beneath the trees. We dropped down to the southern side of the ridge and fought our way through dense vegetation before climbing back to another saddle. On the way a wombat bounded away down the hill. It would be nice to think we were the first people it had seen but the tinny we found suggested otherwise. On the return trip we kept to the ridgetop which seemed a little easier. A short, steep climb took us to the highest point of the ridge (1018 metres) where we sat on a rocky pinnacle with a wide view.

Westwards was the whole eastern face of Ben Lomond, nearly 20 kilometres in length and all of it more than 300 metres above us, an impressive view. Around the northern horizon we picked out another Scottish émigré—Ben Nevis, Mt Maurice, and on the

Tower Hill

We approached Tower Hill from Fingal, along the Mathinna road. At 1117 metres the East Tower is higher than Byatts Razorback, but access is easy thanks to Forestry Tasmania, which has placed a lookout on the top with an access road to the foot of the final tower. To drive all the way you will have to arrange to collect a key because there is a locked gate about a kilometre from the end of the road. The East Tower is a great, rocky monolith which justifies its name and the short climb may be accomplished by ladders bolted into the rock. Real tigers will ascend without the ladders, of course, but will not find it easy. The view from the top is widespread, the whole of north-east Tasmania from Ben Lomond to the east coast with the peaks of the Freycinet Peninsula in view over the southern wall of the Fingal valley.

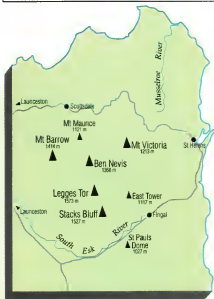
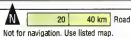
The demanding part of this walk is the West Tower, a further two kilometres to the north-west, where effort is the main requirement for bashing through the bush which behaves as though it does not want you there. Considering what humans have done to much of the bush hereabouts that is understandable. Both East- and West Tower reach 1100 metres and are included in the splendid book, *The Abels; Tasmania's*



It was considerably easier below the ridge and we made progress through bush and rocks to reach some steep pinnacles. Was this the summit? We were not sure so clambered to the top; here we had a fine view of the ridge behind us including the *mauvais pas*, or 'bad step'—as they call these obstacles in Europe—where we had come to a halt earlier. This was not quite the highest point—that was further along the ridge and required some more rough scrub-bashing.

But the view on a perfect autumn day was superb. At 1110 metres the West Tower is high enough to rise above all the surrounding hills except Ben Lomond, which dominates the western horizon. Northwards are Mt Victoria and Mt Albert, with the lower dome of Mt Blackboy in front and Mt Young to the east. Further off to the north-west are the curves of Mt Scott and Mt Maurice and over the north-east shoulder of Ben Lomond, Ben Nevis and Mt Barrow. Southward St Pauls Dome is prominent beyond the Fingal valley. Mountain tops, like Clancy Bush, give 'pleasures that the townsfolk never know' and views that most people never see. Not

north-east tasmania



just of mountains, either, but of the hectares of clear-felling plainly visible from here but hidden from tourists on the roads, who only see the screen of trees left along the ridgetops and not the devastation beyond.

Rattler Range

Due north of Tower Hill past the little township of Mathinna is the Mt Victoria Forest Reserve, a magnificent area of almost pristine rainforest, preserved this time for its own sake and crowned by the pinnacles of Mt Victoria itself. The area can be reached by back roads from Tower Hill but we approached from Ringarooma. Mt Victoria looks superb from the Ringarooma valley, a great pyramid floating high above on the shoulders of its satellite ridges, one of which, the Rattler Range, was our next objective.

The Rattler encloses the eastern side of the Ringarooma valley, a wall of dense rainforest over 800 metres high. There is a four-wheel-drive road up from Ringarooma but we approached from Branxholm and the 'back road' to Weldborough which passes the old Mt Paris dam. Miners frequented this area once but today the only industry is logging. Pine plantations and devastation surround the old dam site. We finally left the flattened forests behind on a bumpy four-wheel-drive track high on the Rattler Range which took us to the portals of the forest and the boundary of the extensive forest reserve.

Creeping into the forest was like entering another world. Tall myrtles marched into the mysterious depths of the forest. All was silent beneath the trees, just the wind sighing through the canopy. Silent it may

have been but everything was so alive in the forest, something growing everywhere, mosses draping the branches, lichen cloaking the tree-trunks, fungi weaving through the carpet of leaves or sprouting from fallen trees, full of lovely shades of green and brown and deep red.

The range is a long ridge running up to the flanks of Mt Victoria, an almost flat walk, no puffing steeply uphill or slithering down, just a gentle amble along the ridge with plenty of time to absorb the beauty and the atmosphere. After a couple of kilometres we came to an open area, a narrow corridor through the bush, a long-disused track almost obliterated now but soon to be left as we plunged back into the forest. The ridge swung to the east and then back to the south-east again and at a narrower section we had views of the trees disappearing down the slopes towards the Ringarooma valley.

An area with thick fern cover brought us to a faint track, long disused but still just visible, which kept us on a straight course through the forest until we emerged almost without warning from the trees into a clearing where we found an ancient cairn

slope of the hill but to the south and south-west we glimpsed mountains rising above the scrub, the rocky ridge of Mt Victoria not too far distant, with Mt Saddleback and Ben Nevis beyond. Further away now was the huge bulk of Ben Lomond and away to the west, Mt Barrow with the radio masts visible on its summit.

The forest continued southward to reach Cottons Plain and the Mt Victoria road but we left that section for another day and returned to the cars.

Mt Victoria

At 1213 metres Mt Victoria is the highest and finest peak of this quartet, a splendid, rocky ridge crowned by twin summits rising above some beautiful rainforest. Named after a monarch, it is indeed fit to be the queen of northern Tasmania. There are signposted tracks to the summit from the northern and southern sides and a traverse of the mountain would make an enjoyable day.

The approach from Ringarooma is impressive, the road climbing beside the green valley with the forested wall of the Rattler Range across the valley and the mountain towering ahead. We took the track from the southern side which led

through a short, boggy section among tea-tree to a lovely climb through ancient myrtle and sassafras. Then we emerged into scrub on the upper slopes with the rocky ridge towering above, an exciting prospect.

You do not often get to the top of the mountains around here without some boulder hopping and Mt Victoria is no exception although the boulderfield here is not extensive. Up among the rocks of the summit ridge there was a bit of scrambling to gain the highest pinnacle. Astride the narrow summit ridge there is a superb, all-round view of northern Tasmania. Beyond the ridge is the great hump of Mt Albert and further east, the rocky crest of Mt Young, Mt Saddleback and Ben Nevis, now seen from the north, rise in isolation from the bush while almost due south the profiles of East Tower, West Tower and Byatts Razorback are clear. Ben Lomond was now south-west beyond Mt Saddleback. The sea, too, is visible from here, Bass Strait to the north and the Tasman Sea and the east coast and, away beyond the eastern horizon, we could imagine New Zealand rising from the waves.

These mountains of north-east Tasmania may not have the isolation and grandeur of the South-west but are easily accessible from Launceston and make splendid walks. ●

These areas are shown in the eastern half of the Tasmania North East 1:250 000 Tasmag.

Michael Manhire has walked and climbed in the UK, where he grew up; in the French and Austrian Alps; in Norway; and in Papua New Guinea, where he worked as a teacher. He now lives and walks in Tasmania. In 1996 he left his job and hopes to earn at least a subsistence living as a writer.



before the traces of the track disappeared into thick scrub.

The map showed a belt of scrub leading to an open area so we pushed through tea-tree among scattered boulders hoping to enter the open and have a view of the surroundings but half an hour of struggling brought us to more scrub, without views. We selected the largest rock and scrambled on top where there was just room for the whole party and finally we did get a bit of a view. Northward it was blocked by the

A Grand Circuit

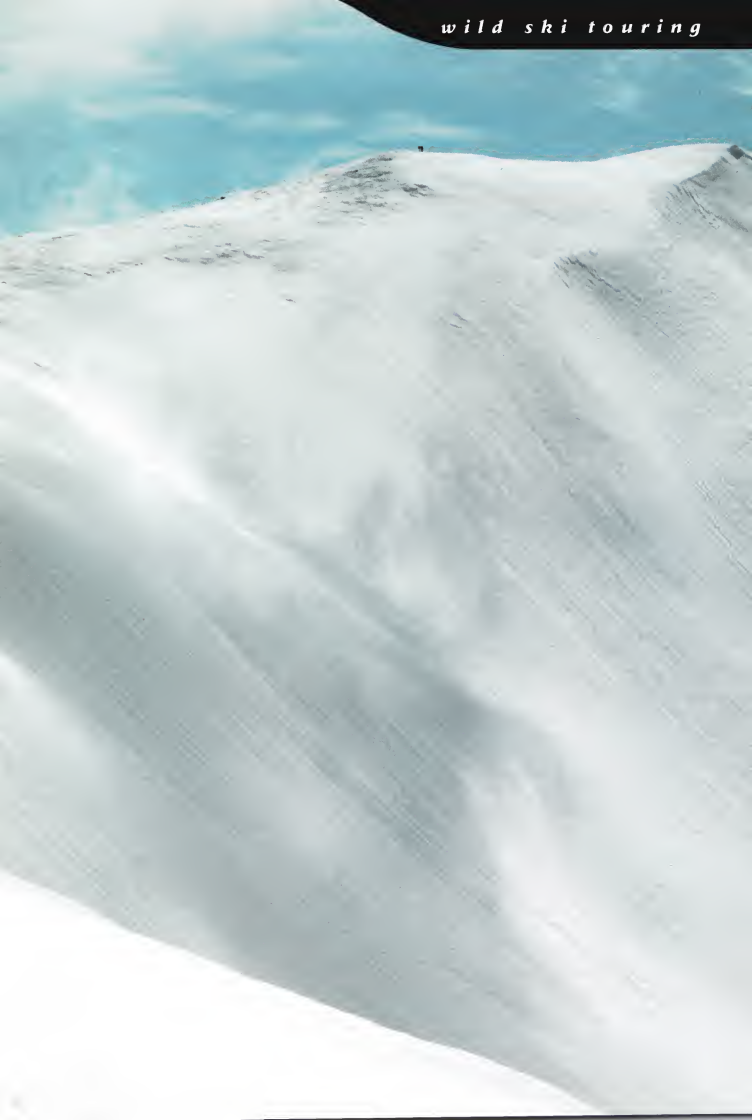
Skiing Australia's highest mountain tops,
by David Wattachow



after nosing along the Geehi Dam road in the pitch-black darkness John Allison and I were glad to find the small quarry that denoted the start of the Pinnacle Fire Track. We were on our annual pilgrimage from Adelaide to the snow and our plan was to 'ski the tops' of Kosciuszko National Park in a 'grand circuit' encompassing the Grey Mare Range, Mt Jagungal, the Brassy Mountains and the Main Range and returning by way of Hannels Spur. To achieve this would be quite dependent on the weather and as a westerly change was in the offing we chose to head up on to the Grey Mare Range first as it would be more sheltered than the Main Range. A glance at the logbook showed that only one other party had recorded their passage to the Grey Mare that winter and several parties walking the proposed route in summer had taken nine days (whereas we had at most seven days).

Our fully loaded packs on which skis were strapped nudged 27 kilograms so we were glad of the diversion of the beautiful rainforest and fern-filled gullies as we laboured our way upwards. Fortunately, we encountered the snowline at about 1300 metres and quickly donned skis to follow the well-defined fire track behind the Pinnacle and on to the tops. As we gained more height the gums thinned out and the snow cover deepened, making the track hard to follow, and it was indistinguishable by the time we topped out on the Grey Mare itself just after lunch. The views across the Geehi Gorge to the Main Range were spectacular but the tops were in cloud and we were glad that we

Carruthers Peak looms above Club Lake's cirque.
Glenn van der Knijff



weren't climbing Hannels Spur, of which the upper sections were covered in mist.

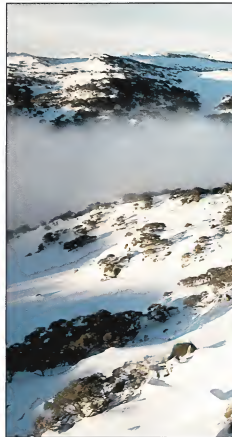
Following the Grey Mare we delighted in a series of downhill runs (punctuated by energy-sapping climbs, unfortunately) until we crested atop a ridge that gave us a magnificent view of Mt Jagungal, with the setting sun throwing it into sharp relief. Daylight was running out and a cursory look failed to reveal Grey Mare Hut (this geographical embarrassment was to turn out to be fortuitous) so we cruised down to the creek to camp. It had been a long day with more than 1000 metres of climbing and about 23 kilometres of skiing with full packs, and we flopped on to the snow.

We were in a rather exposed position but there was no sign of the forecast change. However, during the night we heard the unwelcome sound of rain on the tent. When it snows it is usually noiseless and you don't get wet either. Fortunately, the rain eased before daybreak but by now Mt Jagungal was obscured by dense cloud.

As we skied north, directly up Straight Creek, we came across two wombats foraging in the icy waters. One bolted straight up through the snow; the other elected to sit motionless in the freezing stream. Straight Creek finally bends east to its origins in the Strumbo Range and we followed it up and into a white-out. We had hoped to take a short cut across this range of rolling foothills to the base of Mt Jagungal but the mist was so dense that we completely lost any sense of direction of creek drainage patterns among other things. Indeed, without following the compass I changed direction by 90° in a few steps. A prickle of anxiety began to surface so we set a rough south-easterly course to intersect one of the branches of the Geehi River. After two hours the drainage pattern was approximately in accord with the map but we were still disoriented. Time to sit down and boil the billy. While doing so a mo-

south, crossing tenuous snow bridges spanning the Geehi River and climbing towards the Brassy Mountains. The wind was still blowing strongly over the Kerries and it strengthened during the afternoon as we made our way to Tin Hut. The cloud cleared from Mt Jagungal, giving us a great backdrop.

Tin Hut is at the head of the Valentine Creek and Finns Creek and wind was funnelled along this route. We had just stoked



up the combustion stove when five other skiers came in; two were quite sick with gastro-enteritis, which they thought they had caught at Grey Mare Hut. So we were indeed lucky to have missed that hut! Apparently giardia (the most likely infection) is spreading throughout the streams in Kosciuszko National Park and this made us uneasy about staying in the huts.

All night the hut rattled and shook with the strength of the wind and although the sky was clear in the morning we found ourselves struggling into a gale blowing over Gungaharian Pass. The only compensation was that we could ski straight down the fairly steep, western slope because the wind slowed us down. We didn't stop at the known, bug-ridden Schlink Hilton but cruised on up to Schlink Pass and started our climb on to the Main Range. Here, if anything, the wind was worse, almost knocking us over and forcing us on to the lee side of the Rolling Ground. This added several extra kilometres to the 'hike' across to Consnet Stephen Pass.

We traversed around Mt Tate, gingerly crossing a sizeable avalanche field that had come from large cornices breaking away. It was impossible to stay on top because of



The author looking for snow on the lower Grey Mare Fire Track. *John Allison*. Near right, the Main Range seen over the Kerries from Cup and Saucer Hill. *van der Kriff*. Far right, we do have 'em in Australia; avalanche debris on Mt Tate. *David Wattchow*

mentary parting in the fog revealed the distinctive shape of Tarn Bluff and we were soon camped among snow gums on a ridge above the Geehi, brewing up and having a good feed because an ascent of Mt Jagungal was out of the question at that stage.

That night a few stars became visible but in the morning Mt Jagungal was still in cloud. The inimitable 'Johnno' solved the problem by remaining unperturbed in his sleeping-bag until the fog started to lift and we headed for the summit with light packs. There was still some mist on top but we didn't have real route-finding problems and the Tele-marking down the untracked southern face made the effort of the ascent worth while.

In contrast to the previous day, the sun now began to shine and burn off the cloud, revealing the magnificent panorama of the Geehi valley. We packed up and headed



the wind and our only respite that day was when we skied down Pounds Creek, losing all our hard-won height in about ten minutes! We managed to find shelter near Twynam Creek by digging into a large snow bank.

The night was crackling with cold and absolutely brilliant with stars redolent of lines from *The Man from Snowy River* by Banjo Paterson: 'and the night stars fairly blaze at midnight from a cold and frosty

down Wilkinsons valley, enjoying untracked skiing to the Abbott Range. Here we were forced to take off our skis and kick steps to traverse safely through the rocky bands, and then we again enjoyed skiing on softening snow to the top of Hannels Spur.

The route is said to be marked by cairns and markers but these were completely buried by the deep snow. Several ridges also radiate from this point and the prospect of

hard to follow in its upper section and at one point John said, 'we're travelling west'; this was confirmed shortly afterwards when we encountered a creek running west. Fortunately, we had not strayed too far off the ridge and regained it, along with some welcome signs of the route.

By the way, we were carrying a mobile phone for 'safety' as there were only two of us. However, we only managed to get reception on the very tops and not on the spurs or in the gullies where an accident would be more likely to happen.

The next morning high cloud was shifting in, vindicating our decision to get on and down the spur. The snow gave out surprisingly quickly and we trudged on down, acutely aware of compressed toes in ski boots not really designed for walking. Nevertheless we were able to appreciate the gradual change from snow gum to mountain ash and finally exited from the forest. We took our hats off to Hannel, who cut the track originally and took cattle to the High Plains along this route.

A final hurdle awaited us—the flooding Swampy Plain River, well fed by the warm weather and snow melt. A high-deep wade through the swollen stream got our hearts pumping before we trudged off down the Alpine Way with our boots full of water. A glance back up the spur showed the now distant snowy tops and the incredible drop. Although the tops were in cloud we luxuriated in sunshine at the Swampy Plain camp-site and feasted on our extra supplies as we were a day and a half ahead of schedule.

With blistered feet and tired legs we weren't too proud to accept lifts back to the



sky—indeed, we were perched just above the Snowy River itself. Next morning the surface was frozen and icy but as the wind had dropped we decided to climb back on to the tops by way of the Crummer Spur and Blue Lake. Attaching skins to our skis was a great help in traversing the icy surface and the trip into the cirque of Blue Lake with its icy bluffs was certainly worth it. A further haul up on to Carruthers Peak was rewarded by the incredible view across the Sentinel to Watsons Crags, replete with their winter mantle of snow. At one stage we had entertained the idea of descending these crags but the drop-offs looked formidable without the appropriate gear.

Large comices forced us to stay directly on top of Carruthers Peak and Mts Lee and Northcote and the tops were very icy, which made control of the skis difficult. We finally dropped into Mueller Pass and here we had to make a decision. Ideally we would have skied on to Mt Kosciuszko and the Rams Head Range but 'mares' tails' streaming rapidly across the sky indicated that another change was on the way, and we were of the opinion that the Hannels Spur route would not be easy—and even less so in bad weather. Therefore we turned



dropping directly into the legendary, dense scrub of the Geehi or Swampy Plain Rivers was not an inviting one; we were quite paranoid about finding the top of the 'right' ridge. As the ridge steepened we began to plunge down through thigh-deep, enervating snow, our feet often breaking through and catching on the vegetation underneath. We felt fairly vulnerable in this spot as a twisted or broken ankle or knee would have caused a serious predicament. The ridge runs north-west, is very broad and is

car. This completed our 'grand circuit' which entailed some 100 kilometres of skiing and 2000 metres of climbing and descending some of Australia's wildest and most magnificent snow country. 🍌

The best maps to use are the *Mt Kosciuszko and Khandoban 1:50 000 Central Mapping Authority sheets*.

David Watchow started bushwalking with the Adelaide Bush Walkers almost 20 years ago and enjoys a wide range of activities. His wife is also a keen bushwalker and latterly their energies have centred on introducing their children to the outdoors. These activities are a good foil for David's work as a surgeon and research scientist!

adding a touch of the

You don't have to take the Spice Girls with you

Are you sick of the usual 'spag bol' or the 'just add water, stir and eat' style of meals while out in the bush? If so, chuck out the packaged meals, the dehydrated peas and carrots and read on.

I crave variety and love to invent new gourmet delights to inflict upon my fellow walkers or ski-tourers. On a walking holiday some years ago I managed to produce about 20 dinners that were completely different. I'll admit that some were a little odd but the majority won sincere approval.

Most were conjured up after hours of foraging through Melbourne's burgeoning Asian grocery shops.

If you're not a seasoned Asian traveller, you might suffer a touch of culture shock when you enter your first Asian grocery. The aisles are narrow, the cluttered shelves overstuffed from floor to ceiling and the air is filled with an unfamiliar, pungent aroma. But do continue. Here you'll unearth a whole new world of foodstuffs that are ideal for bushwalking.

Allow yourself plenty of time to find things. You probably won't be able to understand the signs and I have yet to find a shop that employs the type of filing system to which my Western brain is accustomed, anyway! Befriend the staff and they'll usually go out of their way to assist. Often items are known by several names so it may help to describe what you want. Most quality Asian cookbooks have excellent photographs of many unusual ingredients and I sometimes go shopping book in hand.

The number of useful ingredients to be found in an Asian grocery is limited only by your imagination. I'll concentrate on a few of those I have found to be highly successful in my bush cooking.

Meat

Dried chilli beef is cheap and very tasty. If you don't like your food very hot, scrape off some of the excess chilli before you begin. Soak in hot water for as long as possible before cooking. I've often allowed it to soak in a plastic container in my pack all day, reheating it at lunch-time. It's

a good excuse to stop and boil the billy for a cuppa! This beef is particularly good in a coconut curry, served with rice and papadams. Chinese sausage (lap cheong) is another good meat to buy. It is traditionally steamed and served sliced with rice but it is also delicious when fried and added to fried rice or noodles, or chow-mein-style dishes. I've even used it in omelettes for breakfast.

Dried fish

Fish plays a major role in Asian diets and because of hot climates combined with a

move excess salt before adding them to rice or noodle concoctions. Reconstitute some dried mussels, anchovies, shrimps and crab meat, mix with your favourite salad-dressing and you're halfway to a delicious seafood cocktail. At least it will seem that way by day seven!

Dried vegetables

Asian groceries are the places to buy your dried onions, mushrooms, tomatoes, shallots and garlic. These items are cheap and you can often buy them in bulk. One of my favourites is bawang goreng, crispy, fried



lack of refrigeration an enormous range of dried fish is available. There are literally dozens to choose from, some better than others. It's wise to try your new recipe at home first so that you don't end up with a group of hungry, unhappy campers. Once, on a trip in South-west Tasmania, I was not exactly the most popular chef around after serving a lump of oversalted, rubbery stuff that smelt like something even the cat would reject! However, there are many excellent fish on Asian grocery shelves.

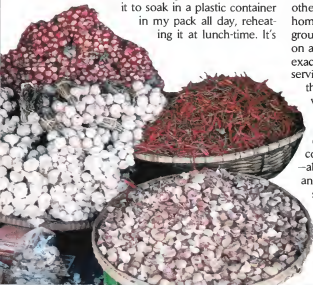
My favourite is file-fish. It has soft, delicate flesh and tastes great in a coconut gravy. Don't overcook it, though—about six to eight minutes is just right and it doesn't require presoaking. Dried shrimps are also tasty. It is best to soak and rinse them several times to re-

constitute some dried mussels, anchovies, shrimps and crab meat, mix with your favourite salad-dressing and you're halfway to a delicious seafood cocktail. At least it will seem that way by day seven!

onions which add a simple but delicious touch to a stir-fried vegetable- or noodle dish. Another interesting ingredient to try is bean curd. This can be bought in many forms. I find a powdered one most successful. You add water and it sets into firm, white cakes of curd in a couple of hours. The cakes must be handled gently and are a good addition to soups and noodle dishes. Seaweed is perhaps an unconventional vegetable in Western society but it adds flavour, interest and colour to many dishes. It is reputed to be very good for you, too.

Dried fruit

Dried mangoes are a favourite and go well with ultra-heat-treated (UHT) cream or custard. Dried bananas are the main ingredient in my favourite dessert—caramelised ba-



ENT to your bush meals

a good time in the bush; by *Monica Perrymeant*

bananas. Buy the pliable dried bananas which are usually sold whole (not the crisp banana chips). Make a caramel sauce with butter and sugar and cook the bananas in it. Dried bananas fried with cumin, turmeric and grated coconut also make an excellent side dish for curries.

Fresh produce

White radishes are a great vegetable to take into the bush. They look like giant, white carrots, don't need refrigeration and will last for ages. I've even left them in food-supply dumps for several weeks at a time. Try eating them raw (scraped, grated or sliced) or boiled as an accompaniment to curries. Fresh okra is another veggie that's easy to carry. It's lightweight, firm enough to withstand some rough handling and can be made into an excellent curry. Make sure that you get the sweet okras and not the bitter ones. I remember once having to use facial expressions in the shop to get the message across! Small, green limes are also worth carrying. Add the juice to a curry or—better still—to your gin and tonic. You can also buy frozen lime leaves; they keep well for a few days once thawed and give zest to your coconut curries. Pack some snow peas as well. They're light, colourful and taste good either raw or cooked.

Tinned food

Almost anything can be bought in tins at an Asian grocery. I often use small tins of crab or squid with main meals. For lunch I like sardines in chilli sauce or fried mackerels, also in chilli sauce.

Rice

Rice is my preferred choice as the basis for meals in the bush. It is rich in carbohydrates, is filling and goes with just about everything. It is also easy to cook if you use the absorption method. Bring the rice to the boil and put it aside with a lid on for five minutes. Bring to the boil again and set aside. Do this a few times until all the water is absorbed. There are many varieties of rice to choose from. Basmati goes well with Indian-style dishes, jasmine is great with Thai food, red rice is suited to Mexican dishes and saffron rice adds colour to your paella.

Noodles

Unless you see it for yourself, you cannot possibly imagine the variety on offer in the noodle department. Cellophane noodles (which look like thin, transparent threads) are perfect for soups and Japanese recipes. Soba noodles are made of buckwheat and are good with a Bolognese sauce. Udon noodles are very thick, wheat noodles and go well with fish and vegetables. Try some crispy, fried

noodles for a change. Fry them lightly, then serve with shredded meat or shrimps and vegetables as chow mein. Take care with some of the instant noodle soup packets—the little sachets often contain chilli of a variety that brings tears to most people's eyes!

Bread

For variety, serve some freshly made, unleavened bread with dinner. This is quick and easy to make, and roti flour is best for this type of bread. Simply add water, knead the dough, pat it out flat and fry lightly in a non-stick fry-pan. If you're into garlic, spread some liberally over the dough during the kneading process and shallow-fry the dough in oil. It'll keep the dingoes at bay!

satay powders and pastes. Skewer some zucchini, capsicum and salami, cover with satay sauce and pretend you're in Singapore! If you feel like a bit of Japan, dashi powder makes a tasty soup base. Or try some powdered wasabi, a very hot, Japanese horseradish. It gives a real lift to your sandwiches. Add some curry paste for a good, hot curry. The paste is available in many flavours and tastes quite authentic. It stores well in plastic film canisters and lasts for about a week without refrigeration. Similarly, coriander paste adds a special quality. For that true Indonesian flavour you'll need some trasi or blachan (dried shrimp paste). Pack it securely, though, as it smells revolting. Some tamarind will add a



Accompaniments

Prawn crackers come in many different sizes, shapes and colours. You can even buy a bag of multicoloured ones—just the thing for a party. You'll need to carry some oil in which to fry them. I always save the remaining oil and reuse it the following evening. Pappadams are an excellent accompaniment to any curry and they, too, are available in different sizes and flavours. Try the chilli pappadams or the delicious garlic ones.

Spices and Flavours

Again, the list could go on forever. A major flavouring I use is coconut milk. You can buy it in many forms. The lightest is a powder but the best is a small UHT container of coconut cream. Gado-gado is a peanut-based sauce that can be bought powdered or as a solid paste. Add water and it becomes an excellent base for vegetable dishes. You can also buy similar

East meets West! *Stephen Curtain*. Bottom left, the real thing, River Kwai, Thailand. *Chris Boxter*

special, acidic taste. Buy the paste that you mix with water. Soy sauce also comes in various styles. I buy the thick soy which has a consistency similar to honey. It is very strong and should be used sparingly.

Now that I've whetted your appetite, you should remember always to take more flavourings, spices and accompaniments than you need for yourself. You'll have an instant circle of admirers who will be all too happy to swap with you. You may even be able to score some of the things you had to leave behind to fit in the wok—port wine and Tim Tams! 🍷

Monica Perrymeant has been active in a wide variety of outdoors pursuits for the last 18 years. She has succeeded in combining her love of adventure with her passion for travel and now runs her own business organising walking holidays.

Fire and ice

Victorian coastal and mountain scenes, by *Janusz Molinski*



Sand patterns at Cape Everard, Croajingolong National Park. Right, near Mt St Gwinear. All photos were taken in Victoria.





Tidal River, Wilsons Promontory.



Janusz Molinski is a freelance photographer who has been capturing landscape images for almost 15 years. One of his greatest passions is experiencing the Australian Alps for their many moods and textures which present a myriad of opportunities for interesting wilderness photography. His photographs appear in calendars, diaries and books and he has exhibited nationally and abroad.

Walking Permits

Greg French argues the case against them

In Wild no 59 Tracey Diggins put the case in favour of walking permits. Now for the opposite view.

In July 1996 the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service proposed a permit scheme for all walkers who camp overnight in the World Heritage Area. All walkers would have to register their proposed itinerary some time in advance, physically collect a permit from an authorised office, and pay a nightly fee for each person. The extremely detailed proposal was released as a draft for public comment. There was much opposition to it and many felt that the PWS was not prepared to have meaningful consultation. An independent consultant assessed the issues and two public workshops were convened in May—one in Hobart, the other in Deloraine. This article includes views of participants at the Deloraine public workshop.

Why was the permit system proposed?

Many observers feel that parts of Tasmania's WHA are in danger of being 'loved to death' and that present management strategies do not stem the damage which results from constantly increasing usage.

What are the main objections?

- A permit system would impinge on spontaneity and flexibility.
- Only parts of the WHA are in trouble so why inconvenience all users?

- Implementing a permit system would be costly. The money might be better spent on track maintenance and education.
- Alternative management practices (which could allow for an increased number of visitors) might too easily be delayed or ignored.
- The proposed system is an imported strategy designed mainly to deal with seasonal bushwalkers and is not sympathetic to the needs of locals.
- It is possible that the permit system could be extended to other parts of Tasmania.
- A permit system would be impossible to police or control and would change patterns of use in unpredictable (perhaps undesirable) ways.
- The need for quotas was based on research which was not carried out by independent investigators.

How many people are using the WHA?

The PWS estimates present overnight walkers to be 25 000. Track strategists at the meeting suggested that this was perhaps 80 per cent of the utilisation desired by the PWS.

The PWS argues that the number of visits is (or soon will be) too high, but overseas reserves cope with infinitely higher demand. However, the PWS's argument that Tasmania's wilderness is unusually sensitive is legitimate.

There is conflict between two ideologies. The first claims that wilderness exists prim-

arily for its own sake and it is best to aim at minimal visits—many people can find sufficient spiritual fulfilment by experiencing the wild from afar. The second views the spirituality of wilderness as a product of flesh-and-blood contact and suggests that wilderness should be made available to as many people as is sustainable.

Participants at Deloraine said that they rarely (if ever) felt crowded in the WHA and that present use was far below what might be achieved one day. They thought that in most areas there would be no need for quotas in the foreseeable future and thus there was no reason to introduce a permit system.

Is a blanket system the best option?

The PWS argues that if permits were required for problem areas only, walkers would simply go elsewhere, perpetuating problems in even more fragile parts of the WHA. Participants at Deloraine were of the opinion that walkers at present using problem areas would not be put off by a requirement to get a permit.

Are tracks sustainable?

Any track can be hardened to a point where it is capable of withstanding im-

Even the roof of Australia is not immune from walker pressures. Mt Kosciuszko's summit, New South Wales. *Lachlan Drummond*



mense pressure. Faecal waste can be carried out. The argument is whether track development is appropriate and/or affordable. The PWS believes that new tracks should not be allowed to develop, particularly in untracked areas. (However, it also believes that certain tracks should be further developed and others should be maintained at current standards.) Users appear to think that the WHA should be managed to cater for many more visitors.

Walking Track Management Strategy

After four years of extensive public consultation, education and scientific research, the Parks & Wildlife Service, Tasmania, has released the Walking Track Management Strategy for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Since 1994 many of the recommendations relating to the track work, education and scientific research and monitoring have been progressively implemented.

A difficulty has been the proposal to introduce a permit system for overnight walkers. This proposal was approved by the minister in December 1997 when the results of controlled trials and aerial and ground monitoring programmes proved that the current level of use in many sensitive areas could not be sustained, even for a fairly limited time.

During 1996 the PWS researched the various types of user regulation systems operating around Australia and overseas. Public comment was then sought. It was found that the PWS would need further to develop mechanisms to accommodate concerns of some stakeholders. The PWS has now gathered more information from major stakeholders. This will assist in developing the final system for implementation in the summer of 1999/2000.

When the permit system is developed it will be well advertised and a report will be available to the public. Any suggestions and comments about the strategy or the permit system should be directed to: Track Management Team, GPO Box 44a, Hobart, Tas 7001; phone (03) 6233 2669.

Tracey Diggins

Are funds available to ensure that current tracks are sustainable?

At present the PWS spends \$225 000 annually on track maintenance. It estimates that a permanent, professional staffing position would cost \$56 000 plus resources. Thus a permit system which employs, say, just one enforcement officer, one co-ordinator and one clerical assistant would result in an outlay approaching the present track maintenance budget. (Extra money is spent on other track issues.)

However, the head of the Track Management Team stated that track management was relatively well funded and additional funds were likely to be available for it.

wilderness needs people; without them it will perish.

Alternatives to the permit system

It was also pointed out that people venturing into core wilderness and/or problem areas could be managed by more passive means.

Advertising should be wound back if visits to the WHA were really approaching capacity. So should promoting Tassie as a walkers' paradise.

The PWS argues that walking patterns are changing rapidly and that a permit system is the best way to control the constantly expanding network of unplanned routes. Participants pointed out that new tracks and the increased use of those on previ-



Left, signs of the times, Western Arthur Range, Tasmania. *Stephen Curtain.* Above, camp-site damage, Western Arthurs. *Parks & Wildlife Service, Tasmania.* Near right, snow gum's revenge, Australian Alps Walking Track, Victoria. *Glenn Tempest.* Far right, on the right track? Mt Howitt, Victoria. *Kevin McGernan*

People as a problem

PWS staff argued that every year the WHA was becoming more and more degraded and that user pressure was the core of the problem. In short, that the greed of the individual is threatening the survival of the wilderness.

Few people were convinced that tracks posed a major threat to the overall integrity of the ecosystem.

It was suggested that the vast expansion of the reserve system had primarily been the result of lobbying from outside the PWS. It was the users' 'greed' that had expanded gazetted wilderness, that had clawed back hundreds of thousands of hectares from the brink of destruction. Furthermore, so this argument went, the battle for wild places was far from over. The

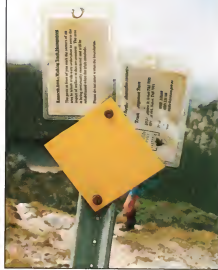
ously neglected routes have primarily resulted from new infrastructure such as roads and ferry services. The PWS has some control over part of this activity as well as over ferry licences. Most arterial roads have now been built and in any case the extent of such development is finite. Walking patterns are likely to stabilise even without a permit system.

Lateral strategies have been adopted overseas which allow greater user pressure. On New Zealand's Milford Track visitors' impressions of overcrowding were reduced simply by making it a one-way route.

Education was seen as another under-utilised tool. If popular writers can change user trends at the drop of a hat, surely the PWS could do the same. The service certainly has a very receptive audience. Why not simply promote a PWS-endorsed walking guide?

The role of guidebooks

A common lament by individuals involved in the track strategy was that journalists and writers of guidebooks had popularised some remote areas to an unsustainable extent. My argument in support of writers is that



they have contributed significantly to public awareness of wild places and thus have played a vital role in the expansion of our reserve system.

Obtaining vital statistics

According to staff from the Track Management Team a compulsory permit system was the only practical way of gaining accurate statistics. Participants suggested several alternative methods such as that used in Tasmania by the Inland Fisheries Commission. Every angler is issued with a numbered licence and at the end of each fishing season a number of licence holders selected at random are invited to respond to a questionnaire. The results of this postal survey have been validated by telephoning non-respondents and by conducting lake-side surveys. The system is a popular and accurate way of gathering information and such a system could be adapted for the specific requirements of the PWS.



The outcomes of the Deloraine workshop

Participants at the workshop believed that the following requirements were essential if the permit system was to become a workable reality:

- that it not be enforced throughout the WHA but be introduced only in specific areas and only after public consultation;
- that the Western Lakes be excluded from any permit system;
- that 'permits' (perhaps simply verification numbers) be available by telephone 24 hours a day;
- that any system be subject to regular, independent reviews;
- that more resources be given to education;
- that fees be minimal so that our reserves remain available to people from all socio-economic backgrounds;
- that it be acceptable to most users;
- that it be enforceable.

An overview of the consultation process

Most people at Deloraine were suspicious and distrustful of the PWS.

One reason might be that the PWS has not sold its case sensitively. The catch-cri 'Access to wilderness is a privilege, not a right', is an example. The word 'privilege' is both threatening and divisive. Perhaps it would have been better to talk about freedom and responsibility.

There may also be a lack of sincerity. Most participants did not regard the event

Management Team acknowledged that in a single day the participants at Deloraine had covered all the issues identified by the PWS over the past eight years.

Despite the best intentions of the PWS, the handling of the draft permit system has been a public-relations disaster. I wonder whether it will now be harder to muster support for new parks and WHAs.

Where to from here?

Whose ideas have most merit? A final report on the overnight-walker permit system has been given to the PWS. For a



as a bona fide attempt to gauge and respond to public opinion. They felt that the PWS was merely offering lip-service, and they backed up their views with endless examples of the public being ignored during the drafting of the Walking Track Management Strategy (for the WHA).

The workshop would have been more beneficial had it been held years ago. Before the final draft of the track strategy had been public. Before the decisions had apparently been made. The Track

copy, write to the Director of the PWS at the address given in the box.

Remember, the PWS is obliged to have some sort of permit system operating by the summer of 1999-2000. The ground rules adopted here will probably influence management practices all over Australia. ●

Greg French has worked as a ranger for the PWS in Strahan and the Central Plateau. He participated in writing the WHA management plan for the western Central Plateau. He is a journalist who mostly writes wilderness articles for Australasian fly-fishing magazines.

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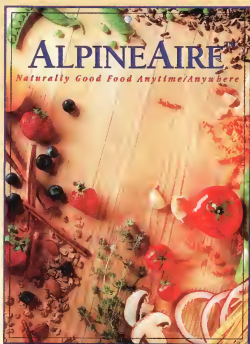
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The Great South West Walk

Meandering along Victoria's west coast, with *Matthias Maass*

Few walks compare to the scenic contrasts of the Great South West Walk. Tucked away in Victoria's south-western corner is an area which comprises the beautiful forest country and heathlands of the State Forests, the gorgeous countryside by the river in the Lower Glenelg National Park and the rugged coastal scenery of the Discovery Bay Coastal Park. In fact the walk's major attractions are the dramatic contrasts between very different types of wilderness. Every day the bushwalker enters a new and different area and the scenery changes completely. Add the historical significance of the area—it was the first in Victoria to be permanently settled by Europeans—and you have all the ingredients for a very interesting and varied long distance walk. Because major sections of the walk along the coastline are very exposed, the weather is a further significant factor; this adds to the walk's character. It is not uncommon for the weather to change numerous times during the day. But far from diminishing the wilderness experience, these changes further enhance a scenery already rich in contrasts.

● When to go

Because of the different types of terrain, the bushwalker has to make compromises. Summer is obviously ideal for the long, sandy stretches along the coast; however, the heat can become rather unpleasant in the forested parts. In winter heavy rainfall may cause the rivers to flood some parts of

It might be long but it's not exactly tough going! *All photos John Chapman*

the walk

at a glance

GRADE Medium

LENGTH Between 10 and 15 days

TYPE Forest, bushland, coastal scenery

REGION South-western corner of Victoria

BEST TIME Year round, but spring and autumn are best

SPECIAL POINTS

Fresh water is scarce in some sections. Prepare for different types of weather



the track. Spring and autumn are therefore best. Avoid Easter, however, when the walk is popular.

● **Safety**

The most effective precaution is to file trip intentions with the police station in Portland. Furthermore, every bushwalker is encouraged to leave his or her name and the destination of the next leg in the logbook at each campsite. The track is well marked (orange triangles or black-and-white emu signs); but since some short cuts or alternative routes are possible, a map and compass are required.

Drinking-water and fire rings for cooking are available at each camp, and all but one have barbecues. However, it is recom-

mended that you carry a fuel stove for the section between Nelson and Swan Lake Camp as wood may not be available.

For information on tides, walkers can contact the Portland Visitor Information Centre or the Friends of the Great South West Walk. Contact details are given below.

Wear two pairs of socks and make sure that your walking shoes are laced tight when you walk on loose and sloping sand. Only experienced walkers should walk from Swan Lake Camp to the Springs Camp.

● **Maps**

For general orientation and planning purposes, *The Great South West Walk* strip

map is sufficient; it can be bought at the Portland Visitor Information Centre. Topographic information is provided by the *Nelson and Portland* 1:100 000 Nat-map sheets which cover most of the track; however, the track is not marked, so it is best to carry all three maps.

● **Further information**

Enquiries should be directed to the Portland Visitor Information Centre, Cliff St, Portland, Vic 3305, telephone (03) 5523 2671, or to the Friends of the Great South West Walk, 43 Edgar St, Portland. For further information on camping in the Lower Glenelg National Park, phone the ranger on (08) 8738 4051.



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tips for

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with sports dietitian Liz Broad

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During intense exercise muscles keep up with the demand for energy by converting carbohydrate in the form of glycogen, to lactic acid. The build up of this and other waste products inside your muscles is one of the factors causing fatigue and soreness.

Endurance exercise can diminish glycogen stores and dehydrate you, leaving muscles feeling tired and "heavy". Activities that combine intensity and endurance, such as team and racquet sports, can be doubly taxing on muscles.

To ease muscle fatigue, it is important to "feed" muscles within 15-60 minutes of exercise. While carbohydrate is essential during this time, research indicates that a combination of carbohydrate and protein can maximise restoration of muscle glycogen and enhance muscle repair.

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To combine carbohydrates and protein after exercise try cereal with milk, fruit with yoghurt, sandwiches with lean meat or low fat cheese or fruit smoothies.

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● Access

Portland, the walk's starting and finishing point, is in the south-west corner of Victoria. From Melbourne it takes about four hours to drive there. Alternatively, there is a train service to Warrambool and a bus service from there to Portland.

● The walk

Generally easy; the only major difficulties are its length (250 kilometres) and the exposure to weather along the coast.

At least ten days are required to complete the circular route; 12 days are reasonable. In all, there are 16 camp-sites but some are so close to each other that two sections of the walk can easily be combined. Halfway along the circuit the walk passes through Nelson; here you can replenish your supplies. A number of possible short cuts and deviations allow the walk to be 'customised'. The route described here proceeds in an anticlockwise direction from Portland.

● Day one

Set out from the Portland Visitor Information Centre and follow the road north along the coast. Cross the old pioneers' cemetery. A short distance over private land and the track reaches the shore line by a staircase at the historic house 'Maretime'. About two-and-a-half kilometres along the beach the track leaves the coast at a caravan park. Follow the red arrows through private land to a road that goes past a primary school. Cross the railway line and walk through forest country to Blackwood Camp.

● Day two

Continue west. For the whole day the track follows a maze of logging tracks through predominantly stringybark forest. Because the track proceeds west orientation is not a problem. After about three hours cross a bridge over the Surry River. Then climb the hillside to reach Cut Out Camp. Traces of bushfire are particularly evident in the vicinity of the camp. From here the track heads generally north and continues to make use of old forestry tracks. It is almost inevitable that you will spot kangaroos and if you're lucky you might see a koala. After a little more than two hours, you will arrive at Cobboonee Camp.

● Day three

Behind Cobboonee Camp orchids and banksias can be seen among the gum-trees. Just past Fitzroy Camp, which is reached after three hours, the vegetation changes yet again. Ferns and blackwoods become abundant as you approach the Fitzroy River, but they are restricted to the small riverbed. Soon you will pass the southern flank of Mt Van Dyke. One hour later the track enters the Lower Glenelg National Park. A short distance after you pass Galloways Creek the track crosses Inkpot Road and then has excellent views of the Glenelg valley. Further down the road you pass the Inkpot, a little lake with virtually black water, before the track finally meets the Glenelg River. Continue past the picnic area for a short distance to reach Moleidae Camp.

● Day four

Behind Moleidae Camp the walking track follows the numerous bends of the river.

The major attraction of this section are the splendid views of the river. Every few moments the river presents itself in a new and more beautiful way and in spring the scenery is further adorned by an abundance of wild flowers. You will need only a little more than two hours to reach Post and Rail Camp; this is unique as it is close to the river and almost at water-level. The next leg of the track alternates between sections along the river and parts where the track meanders pleasantly through the surrounding open woodland. After another two hours you will arrive at Murrells Camp.

● Day five

Behind Murrells Camp the limestone cliffs along the river begin to change the character of the river. You might spot emus on the sections which wind through the forest away from the river. The river valley becomes an impressive gorge. The numerous little tracks leading to vantage points are definitely worth exploring as they offer very good views of steep cliffs. Before reaching Nelson, decide whether you will spend the night at Simons Camp or continue a little further and pitch the tent 'downtown' at the commercial camping ground.

● Day six

After a brief section along a sealed road you will reach a large parking area. From here a sandy track takes you through the dunes and on to the beach. Weather and tide permitting, try to walk as close to the water-line as possible; this is usually the firmest part of the beach. After almost three hours a signpost directs you just behind the dunes to White Sands Camp. Four kilometres beyond the camp an alternative inland route is a welcome change to the coastal scenery. On the protected side of the dunes, this sandy track parallels the shore line through coastal scrub and swamp landscapes to Lake Mombeong.

● Day seven

Head towards the dunes. Once past them turn left to continue along the track in a

south-eastern direction. After almost 17 kilometres of exhausting trudging on soft sand a signpost indicates where to pass over the dunes. The camp-site at Swan Lake is at the foot of a large dune, about 20 minutes from the coast. Here you have beautiful views of the surrounding countryside, mostly pleasant grassland.



History lesson. Right, no bull.

● Day eight

Those in a hurry can backtrack to the beach and spend a final day walking there. Alternatively, an inland route 11 kilometres longer leads past Mt Richmond before rejoining the track at Descartes Bay. Here high cliffs replace the sandy beach. The track continues along the cliff-tops with excellent views of the entire Discovery Bay. One hour further south-west is the Springs Camp: *Nomen est omen*: natural spring water can be obtained from a spring very close to the cliff's edge. Be careful when climbing over the slippery rocks!

● Day nine

Only a short distance from the camp are the Blowholes: the sounds are created by the waves crashing into the cliff. A close view is worth the little deviation as is the Petrified Forest a little further along the

track. Make sure that you also have a look at the seal colony at the south-eastern tip of Cape Bridgewater just before the track swings north. Forty minutes later you will reach the kiosk at Bridgewater Bay. At the end of the sandy stretch of the bay the track heads inland again; this detour has magnificent views of the bay area. Sheltered Trewalla Camp, sitting among dense, coastal vegetation, has an elevated, wooden platform with views above the vegetation.

● Day ten

After six kilometres along the beach the track climbs up the cliffs and then meanders through



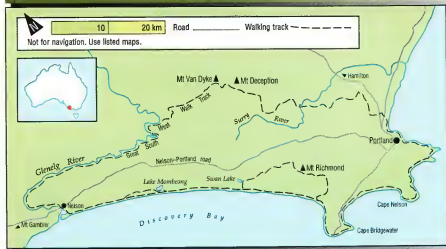
coastal scrub. Despite the magnificent views the remaining section of the Great South West Walk progressively loses its wilderness appeal. Soon afterwards you will reach the lighthouse at Cape Nelson—a popular tourist attraction. Just one hour later you will have to pitch your tent at Mallee Camp, which is relatively close to a bitumen road and overlooks farmland.

● Day eleven

For the last section you have the choice of continuing along Scenic Road or descending almost to water-level to follow a rough track which zigzags through a very dense and moist forest—one of the highlights of the whole walk. The track finally leads to a bitumen track which can be reached by people in wheelchairs. Follow the track past the large aluminium smelter and eventually to Portland's main road. ●

Matthias Moass is a PhD student and part-time freelance journalist and photographer specialising in outdoors topics. His articles have mostly been published in outdoors magazines. He has bushwalked in Africa, the USA, Asia and Europe but still cannot decide which continent ranks second to Australia.

Great South West Walk



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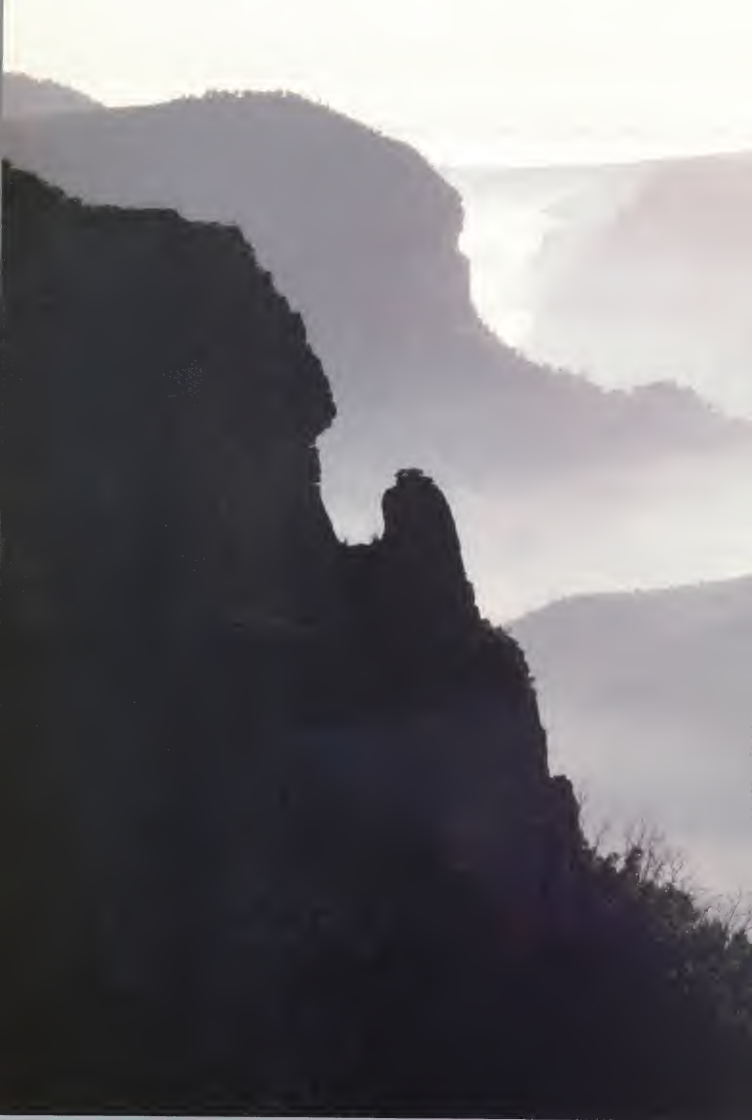
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THE NEW ARMY RESERVE



Blue Gum Forest

The Blue Mountains at their 'bluest'
and most alluring, by Mel Davis

Far below the Govetts Leap Lookout usually besieged by tourist buses lies the Blue Gum Forest. It is hard to imagine the Blue Mountains National Park without the unique Grose valley with its spectacular waterfalls, leafy forests and majestic blue gums. For many generations Blue Gum Forest has been a walkers' playground. In 1931 Alan Rigby, Myles Dunphy, the Mountain Trails Club and the Sydney Bush Walkers saved the forest from a farmer planning to graze cattle and grow walnuts (see 'Blue Gum Forest' article in *Wild* no 67). A year later, having raised £130, they bought the land and donated it to the public. It became incorporated into the Blue Mountains National Park in 1961. The Grose valley and surrounding clifftops have a wide range of walking opportunities, from short one-hour or two-hour clifftop walks to day- and overnight walks. Many of the tracks cross each other, making it possible to combine shorter walks to make longer ones. All tracks are well signposted with guides to the duration, distance and difficulty of each walk. The walk described here takes you to the Blue Gum Forest. You will start at Victoria Falls, camp at Acacia Flat and walk out by way of Govetts Leap.

● When to go

Any time of the year is suitable for walking in the Blue Mountains. Summer and spring are the best times for overnight walks. The days are longer and in early spring the wild flowers, especially waratahs, are at their best. In peak times such as school holidays and public holidays the camping ground at Acacia Flat can be crowded.

● Safety

Be careful if attempting overnight walks in the valleys in winter when the days are shorter and colder. October to March are the peak bushfire danger months; for further information visit information booths or you can phone the ranger on (02) 4787 8877.

● Maps

Katoomba and Mt Wilson 1:25 000 CMA topographic maps.

● Further reading

Contact the National Parks & Wildlife Service or see their publication *Walking Tracks in the Grose Valley*. Many other

publications on the Grose valley's history and walking tracks are also available from outdoors shops and tourist information centres.

● Access

The walk can be done in either direction, starting at Victoria Falls or at Govetts Leap. There is a car park at both ends of the walk so a car shuttle is very convenient.

The train service stops at Blackheath and Mt Victoria. From Blackheath Station, walk three kilometres to Govetts Leap at the end of Govetts Leap Road. From Mt Victoria, walk approximately one kilometre along the Great Western Highway towards Katoomba, then take the turn-off to Victoria Falls Lookout. The lookout is at the end of approximately five kilometres of unsealed road.

● The walk

From Victoria Falls Lookout descend to the creek along a well-maintained zigzag track. Just above the creek you will come to an intersection. To the right, the short track leads you to Victoria Cascades, a series of small waterfalls over stepped rock. The cascades are among the most beautiful waterfalls in the Blue Mountains and well worth a look. There is a conveniently placed log across the creek that is a perfect place to ponder the waterfalls.

The main track then drops steeply downwards alongside Victoria Falls. The forest becomes thick and hides the view of

the walk

at a glance

GRADE Easy

LENGTH Two days

TYPE Riverside walk, rainforest, great views, waterfalls, wild flowers

REGION Grose valley, Blue Mountains

BEST TIME Summer and spring

SPECIAL POINTS

Use fuel stoves only, filter or boil any water collected, and carry out all your rubbish.

Be prepared for sudden changes in weather and take warm clothing and wet-weather gear



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the falls until you reach the base; however, the thundering noise hints at their size. The falls plummet from an overhang which amplifies their sound. At the base of the falls the track appears to continue along the left side of the creek but soon peters out. Cross the creek here and you will discover a sign pointing downstream to Burra Korain Flat camping area and warning that it is a rough track only. The track is not as wide and regularly used as most Blue Mountains tracks but is still quite easy to follow. Erosion has occurred in sections and short, alternative tracks have been made. Take a good map and compass, anyway.

For the remainder of the day all you have to remember is to stay on the right side of the creek when facing downstream.

For a little over a kilometre—until the creek meets the Grose River—the valley is quite steep and well forested. The official Burra Korain Flat camp-site is at the junction of the creek with the river. The camp-site is fairly large and flat but there isn't a sign to indicate that it is an official camp-site. There are several other camp-sites along the first section of the walk before the turn-off to Pierces Pass.

At this junction the track turns to the right alongside the creek-bed and after a couple of metres resumes along the river-bank. Approximately two kilometres after the junction the track crosses two minor creeks coming down from the right ten minutes apart. You will reach the sign pointing across the river to Pierces Pass and straight ahead to Acacia Flat 1.2 kilometres after the second creek crossing.

Pierces Pass turn-off marks the halfway point for the day. The banks of the river are good spots to stop for lunch and watch the sunlight turn the surrounding cliffs bright orange.

Continuing, the valley becomes wider with views of Banks Wall to the left. You see the first, small stands of blue gums across the river, a hint of what's to come. After a short section of drippy, green forest you suddenly come upon Blue Gum Forest. The blue gums dominate, allowing very little undergrowth

except a soft carpet of grass. The forest is distinct from anything else you have seen during the day. It looks its best in the afternoon just after rain when sunlight illuminates the trunks' bright yellow and blue. Camping is not permitted at Blue Gum Forest. Continue to Acacia Flat instead.

A big tree marks an intersection of tracks. To the right the track leads to Perrys Lookdown. To the left across the creek it leads to Du Four Head. Acacia Flat camping

had by scrambling on top of Junction Rock.

At Junction Rock the track forks in two directions. To the left it leads to Evans Lookout or into the Grand Canyon; to the right the Rodriguez Pass Walking Track will take you to Govetts Leap. For the next section of the walk the track steepens to form steps and the vegetation becomes thick, dark rainforest. Beside the track Govetts Leap Brook flows swiftly



Bushwalkers' camp at Acacia Flat. *Lucas Trihey*. Pages 64 and 65, Grose valley sunrise. *Greg Child*

area, 500 metres past the big tree, is large, flat, grassy and dotted with huge blue gums. You cannot imagine a more perfect camp-site! Water can be gathered at the creek just a few metres away but it must be filtered or boiled before drinking. There are two drop toilets within the camping area but no rubbish bins. Although there are several established fireplaces do not rely upon firewood being available. Fuel stoves are preferable because they do not leave ugly, burnt patches or destroy valuable habitats.

At night the forest belongs to wildlife, particularly frogs and possums. You might be surprised by the sound of horses' hoofs late at night.

● Day two

Sleep in. Today's walk covers just six kilometres. However, you will want to give yourself plenty of time to enjoy the scenery and have rest breaks in the final, steep section. The track on day two is in slightly better condition and more frequently used than that of the previous day. Take the track leading directly from Acacia Flat. It follows the western side of Govetts Creek for approximately two-and-a-half to three kilometres along the valley floor. In the distance Pulpit Rock is well silhouetted against the sky—unless the day is foggy as the Blue Mountains can be. About 100 metres from Acacia Flat the track crosses a small creek which flows from Orang Utan Gully. Over the next 300 metres three more small creeks are crossed. These may not be obvious unless there has been sufficient rain to fill them. One kilometre past the last creek crossing is Junction Rock, the point at which two major creeks meet to form Govetts Creek. A good view can be

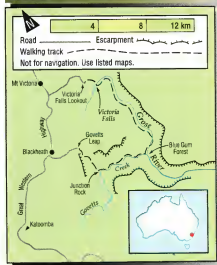
with several small waterfalls. In the afternoon light this section is magnificent. The towering walls surrounding the valley glow like orange jewels in contrast to the dark-green forest. Approximately one kilometre after Junction Rock the track crosses the creek briefly before crossing back again. A further 200 metres away are Trinity Falls, most spectacular after rain.

After Trinity Falls the track briefly crosses the creek twice more before finishing in the spray of the falls at Govetts Leap. The scale and beauty of the falls seem more overpowering when viewed from below. Fitting them into one photograph creates special challenges!

From here you might be wondering where the track leads next. If you look very closely at the right side of the falls you may just be able to glimpse a shiny railing among the greenery. The stairway clinging to the side of the cliff-face is a marvellous mix of engineering and nature. Who could have imagined that a staircase up the side of a cliff could be so discreet and at the same time so beautiful! A short distance along the track is the turn-off to the Jungle Track that takes you to the base of Horseshoe Falls. The short loop track is well worth the diversion and a perfect way to end the walk. 📍

Mel Davis is a fourth-year graphic design student from Newcastle and a member of the Newcastle University Mountaineering Club. Her favourites are photography, design and the outdoors.

Blue Gum Forest area



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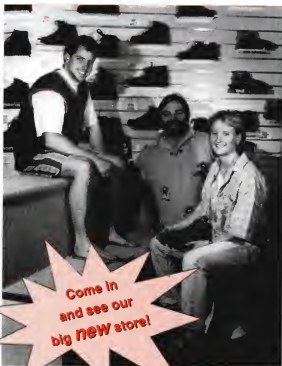
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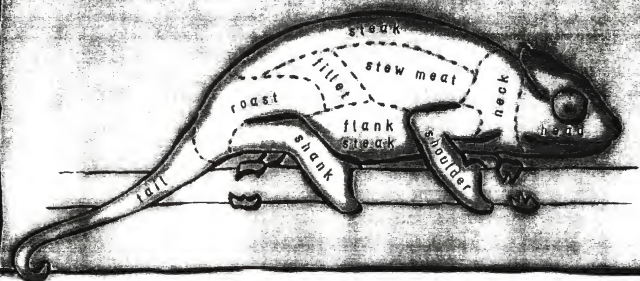
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Note that the Trangia 23 was not surveyed; this simply comprises a stand and burner; \$30. Trekka stoves are new to the Australian market and are distributed and manufactured by Blue Gaz.

Weight

The weights shown are those of the stove burner and tank and exclude any cooking pots and other paraphernalia (such as windshields, which are highly desirable for some models, for example those made by MSR). Some stoves use less fuel than others. This depends on the type of fuel used (gas, Shellite and kerosene stoves typically require much less fuel than those run on methylated spirits) and on the design of the stove. For more fuel-efficient stoves, you need to carry less fuel on the trip. The total weight shown includes sufficient fuel to boil eight litres of water—the amount you might use on a typical weekend trip (except for gas stoves where I've assumed that you would carry a full tank). For stoves that were not available for testing, a typical fuel consumption for the type was assumed. Fuel efficiency may not make a big difference to the weight you carry for a weekend, but the difference becomes very significant on extended trips.

Recommended fuels

The table lists the common fuels which the manufacturer claims can be burnt in each stove.

Burner

Most of the stoves use ported burners although a few have plate (or 'roarer') ones. Ported burners look more like the burner on the gas stove at home. They tend to be much quieter and distribute the heat more evenly across the base of the cooking pot. Plate burners typically have a tulip shape with a plate to spread the flame after it leaves the fuel jet. Although noisy, a well-designed plate burner will give a greater output of heat and may be preferable for some uses (for example, for melting snow). Most methylated-spirit stoves have a simple pot burner into which you pour the fuel.

Boiling time

You will probably want to know how quickly each stove can boil water for hot drinks. This will vary significantly depending on such things as the water temperature, the altitude, whether or not there is any wind and the type of pot you use. The boiling time is the average time taken to boil a litre of water. Each stove had a full tank of fuel at the beginning of the test, was lit according to the manufacturer's instructions and was operated at full throttle on a still day at sea level with an air temperature of about 25°C.

The boiling time and fuel consumption results are considerably higher than those claimed by some manufacturers. You can expect boiling times to be even longer in cold or windy conditions or at higher altitudes.

Some stoves were not tested. The boiling times claimed by Optimus are: 7 minutes

Points to watch

Fuel

Is the fuel readily available where you will use the stove? How much of it will you have to carry on extended trips? If it is a gas stove, will it connect to commonly available gas canisters or only to the one supplied by that manufacturer? Note that fuel costs will be high if gas stoves are used frequently. When comparing weights, consider the weight of the fuel bottle, if separate.

Size and shape

Will the stove fold away into a small space? Is it likely to be stable on uneven ground or in the snow?

Operation

Is the burner well shielded from the wind? What kind of burner has it? While plate burners are great for melting snow, they do

not simmer food or liquid well. How noisy is it?

Snow use

If you intend to use a gas stove in snow, make sure that the can contains a propane/butane mix rather than pure butane. The latter is not much use at subzero temperatures since it will not vaporise easily.

Refilling

Is a single load of fuel enough to cook a whole meal? How fiddly is it to refill? Is it easy to relight when hot?

Quality of construction

Will bits of the stove break, corrode or fall off?

Maintenance

How often will it need maintenance, and how easy is it to pull apart?

(Svea Climber 123R), 12 minutes (Hunter 8R) and 3–3.5 minutes (Ranger 10, Hiker 111 and Explorer 11). For the Sigg Fire-jet the claimed boil time is 5–6 minutes. A time was not available for the Traveller.

When choosing a stove, you should not attach undue importance to boiling time as the differences between many stoves are only a few minutes.

Stability

One of bushwalking's less desirable experiences is having to scrape your meal off the ground after it has been deposited there by a stove upset. A stove with a low centre of gravity will help to prevent this. The ratings are based on the stove unfolded and ready for use. Stoves with a large-diameter base (relative to their height) and rigid pan supports rate best.

Safety

The ratings reflect the suitability of the stoves for novice users. They were determined mainly by the fuel characteristics and, to a lesser extent, by the design of individual stoves. Methylated-spirit stoves are probably safest because of their simple operation, their stability and the low volatility of the fuel. Gas stoves are generally good—simple to operate and easy to relight. Shellite- and kerosene stoves are less appropriate for novices due to the greater complexity of their operation, the higher volatility of the fuel and their greater tendency to flare during lighting.

Heat control

If you only want to boil water, heat control is not an issue. For anything more, you'll want a stove with good heat control. Most of the gas stoves have this and enable you to simmer food or liquid gently. Some Shellite stoves are much better than others; a few even have a degree of heat control almost equal to that of a gas stove. Those with plate burners are less effective as they concentrate the heat over a small area of the pot and don't operate very well at low settings. Stoves with large burners spread the heat more evenly and are also rated higher.

Quietness

Some older bushwalkers still call a stove a 'choofer'. This referred to the distinctive sound made by older-style Shellite stoves with plate burners. A few of these going at the same time in a hut made conversation difficult if not impossible. Today's predominance of ported burners has changed all that. Some still give a pale imitation of the old 'choofer' sound but most models emit a much more modest hissing noise. A methylated-spirit stove is virtually silent.

Snow use

This considers whether the stove will produce high heat output at low temperatures, how it is likely to perform if sitting on the snow (as opposed to requiring a separate mat for insulation and stability) and fuel efficiency (you may need to use it much more to melt ice for water).

New technology









Three of these stoves include technology I have not seen before in a bushwalking stove. The Coleman Max Xtreme uses 'liquid withdrawal' to deal with some of the limitations of conventional gas stoves such as poor performance in low temperatures and declining heat output as the can empties. The manufacturer claims that the stove will maintain high heat output even in temperatures to -20°C . The Camping Gaz Catalytic uses a down-scaled version of the ceramic, domestic cook-top. Although it is fuelled by gas, it does not have an exposed flame. While it may be suitable for use at a fixed camp or hut, its practicality for bushwalking is questionable because the stove remains very hot for a long time after being switched off. The Primus MFS-3288 can burn a variety of liquid fuels as well as gas.

Price

The prices were supplied by the distributors and refer to standard features. ●

John Hillard (see Contributors in *Wild* no 42) has been a keen bushwalker and ski tourist for 26 years and regularly 'goes bush'. He has contributed to *Wild* on a number of occasions.

Lightweight stoves

	Stove, grams	Tank, grams	Fuel, grams (eight litres)	Total, grams	Dimensions (packed) length x height, millimetres	Recommended fuels	Burner	Boiling time, minutes to boil one litre	Stability	Safety	Heat control	Quietness	Stow use	Approx price, £
Camping Gaz France														
	Bluet 270 Micro	180	360	incl	540	90 x 45 x 100	G	ported	6.7	●●	●●●	●●●	●●	35
	Bluet 270 HP	260	360	incl	620	110 x 90 x 110	G	ported	4.6	●●	●●●	●●●●	●●	35
	▲ Catalytic †	420	360	incl	780	100 x 100 x 115	G	catalytic	9.4	●	●●	●●●	●●●●	150
Coleman UK/USA														
	Pocket 3003 HPX #	180	320	incl	500	100 x 70 x 80	G	ported	5.9	●●	●●●	●●●	●●	35
	▲ Super 300B HPX # †	280	320	incl	600	130 x 130 x 80	G	ported	5.1	●●	●●●	●●●	●●	80
	▲ Feather 442	650	incorp	92	742	130 x 120 x 160	S, P	ported	4.5	●●	●●	●●●	●●●●	90
	▲ Apex 2 *	400	100	incl	500	140 x 125 x 80	S, P, K	ported	5.0	●●●	●●	●●●	●●	120
	▲ Max Xtreme	310	230	incl	540	140 x 80 x 110	G	ported	4.4	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	120
	▲ Peak †	600	incorp	96	676	150 x 120 x 150	S, P, K	ported	5.3	●●●	●●	●●●	●●	130
MSR USA														
	WhisperLite **	360	120	102	582	140 x 90 x 100	S	ported	4.5	●●	●●	●●	●●	140
	WhisperLite Internationale **	380	120	102	602	140 x 90 x 100	S, P, K	ported	4.5	●●●	●●	●●	●●	160
	▲ XGK2 **	400	120	110	630	250 x 90 x 90	S, P, K, D	plate	4.8	●●●	●●	●	●	220
	▲ Dragonfly **	440	120	86	646	170 x 100 x 100	S, P, K, D	ported	4.2	●●●●	●●	●●●	●●	250
Optimus Sweden														
	Hunter BR †	640	incorp	96	736	135 x 135 x 80	S	plate	na	●●●	●●	●	●	110
	▲ Svea Climber 123R *** †	450	incorp	96	546	95 x 95 x 125	S	plate	na	●●	●●	●	●	115
	▲ Ranger 10 †	880	incorp	96	976	135 x 135 x 80	K, D	ported	na	●●●	●●●	●●	●●●	195
	▲ Explorer 11 †	570	120	96	786	250 x 90 x 90	S, P, K, D, M	ported	na	●●●	●●	●●●	●●	215
	▲ Hiker 111 †	1580	incorp	96	1676	185 x 185 x 110	S, P, K, D, M	ported	na	●●●	●●	●●●	●●	240
Primus Sweden														
	▲ 3263	190	330	incl	520	90 x 50 x 90	G	ported	6.0	●	●●●	●●●	●●	80
	▲ MFS-3288 †	470	80	114	664	155 x 85 x 120	G, S, K, D, M	plate	4.2	●●●●	●●	●●	●	210
Stegg Switzerland														
	Traveller † ‡	740	incorp	200	940	220 x 220 x 100	M	pot	na	●●●●	●●●●	●●	●●●●	120
	▲ Firejet †	350	120	96	566	115 x 90 x 85	S, P	ported	na	●●●	●●	●●	●●	130
Trangia Sweden														
	▲ T27 *** †	570	incorp	200	770	185 x 185 x 100	M	pot	12.0	●●●●	●●●●	●●	●●●●	90
	▲ T25 *** †	660	incorp	200	860	220 x 220 x 105	M	pot	10.5	●●●●	●●●●	●●	●●●●	95
Trekker China														
	Bakpacker 1057 †	260	320	incl	580	100 x 90 x 90	G	ported	6.6	●	●●●	●●●	●●	30
	▲ Vulcan 1058 PL †	320	320	incl	640	150 x 150 x 90	G	ported	6.4	●	●●●	●●●●	●●	50

● poor ●● average ●●● good ●●●● excellent Fuels: G (Propane and/or butane gas), Shellite, Petrol, Kerosene, Diesel, Methylated spirits Burners: the catalytic burner uses a ceramic cook-top; plate (or 'roarer') burners are tulip shaped—the fuel spurts out of the jet and hits the plate which then spreads the flame; ported burners are the same kind as on your gas stove at home; pot burners are pots into which you pour the fuel incorp stove weight incorporates tank weight † incl stove weight includes a full gas tank # has an anti-flare system * includes fuel bottle and spare parts ** has a shaker jet *** cooking pot included ‡ fuel bottle included † tested by referee) with different-shaped billy at 20° C at sea level The Trangia T25 and T27 have a non-stick version available Fuel weight is that required to boil eight litres (the amount used on a typical weekend trip) except for gas stoves where a full tank is assumed Boiling time was tested at 25° C at sea level (Multi-fuel stoves were tested using Shellite.) na not assessed † not seen by author ‡ not seen by referee The country listed after the manufacturer's name is the country in which the products are made

Lightweight stoves

John Hillard fires 'em up

Before buying a stove, decide what type of fuel is best for your intended use, then select the model you prefer. Compared with the dozens of different types of boots, tents or sleeping bags, there are relatively few makes and models of stoves on the market. Those surveyed are suitable for bushwalking or mountaineering and are widely available. This survey does not include stoves that burn solid fuel tablets. For additional information on stoves, refer to articles in *Wild* nos 40, 42 and 58.

There are some things a stove just can't do! David Noble

This survey summarises the findings of the writer, who was selected for the task because of his knowledge of the subject and his impartiality, among other things. The survey was checked and verified by John Chapman, and reviewed by at least three of *Wild*'s editorial staff. It is based on the items' availability and specifications at the time of this issue's production; however, ranges and specifications may have changed since then.

Some aspects of this survey such as the assessment of value and features—and especially the inclusion/exclusion of certain products—entail a degree of subjective judgment on the part of the author, the referee and *Wild*, space being a key consideration.

An important criterion for inclusion in a *Wild* survey is 'wide availability'. To qualify, a product must usually be stocked by a number of specialist outdoors shops in the central business districts of major Australian capital and other cities. Despite these efforts to achieve accuracy, impartiality, comprehensiveness and usefulness, no survey is perfect. Apart from the obvious human elements that may affect assessment, the quality, materials and specifications of any product may vary markedly from batch to batch and even from sample to sample. It is ultimately the responsibility of readers to determine what is best for their particular circumstances and for the use they have in mind for gear reviewed.

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Blue Water static ropes are specifically designed to deal with the many and varied requirements of abseiling, caving, rescue and industrial use. In any of these applications a static rope must perform its required functions while still being able to withstand an accidental shock load.

All these desired properties must be considered and blended together in the right proportions for a static rope to have the proper performance characteristics. To accomplish this it is important to have a clear understanding of how the core and sheath work together to contribute to its overall performance. A rope's core comprises the bulk of its strength. If, however, the rope's sheath is not durable enough to withstand abrasion, it will quickly wear out and become useless. A rope may have an incredibly high tensile strength

Blue Water II +Plus™

The most popular static kernmantle rope, Blue Water II +Plus is an economical, all-round choice for caving, abseiling and rescue applications. It features low stretch and superior abrasion resistance.

Color: Gold with Blue marker.
Available in 9, 10, 11 & 13 mm diameters.

Exclusively distributed in Australia by Spoken Pty Ltd. 1 800 634 853. email: info@lifelines.com.au internet: <http://lifelines.com.au>

but without enough elasticity to absorb the energy of an accidental shock loading, individuals could be injured or anchors could fail.

All Blue Water static ropes are made from type six nylon for its superior strength, durability and low load stretch. The kernmantle construction used in these ropes features a double-twist cable core for minimal low load stretch (1.3% under an 80 kg load) that resists spinning while ascending or descending and yet will elongate to absorb energy in the event of an accidental dynamic loading. This construction makes our ropes four times more resistant to cutting and abrasion than ropes made with parallel-strand cords. We use at least 16 strands of 6x3-ply yarn (in effect, 54 six-ply strands) to make a Blue Water sheath almost twice the thickness of other static ropes available today. This gives Blue Water ropes greater durability and abrasion resistance than ropes with conventional sheath designs.

Special low-shrink yarns and a unique construction give Blue Water static ropes

Assaultline™

This original, low visibility static rope is useful in police, military and other applications where minimal visual impact is desired. It has the same specifications as Blue Water II +Plus. Colors: Black, Olive Drab.

These ropes comply with the requirements for Static Ropes for Life Rescue Lines in AS4142.3-1993.

banding characteristics that are superior to other static ropes available today. The softer flex means Blue Water ropes do not stiffen excessively with age and ensure superior handling and knot holding ability.

Features of a good static rope:

- Low stretch.
- High abrasion resistance.
- Ability to withstand accidental dynamic loading.
- Resistance to cutting over an edge.
- High tensile strength.
- Resistance to spinning.
- Superior handling characteristics.
- Knotability/flexibility.



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Static ropes

Stephen Bunton puts 'em on the line

Climbing ropes were originally designed to hold a climber if he or she fell but initially the axiom was 'the leader never falls'. In fact, ropes were most useful for hauling seconds who couldn't follow or for abseiling off the climb. Ropes were made of natural fibres and some people even admitted using their mum's clothes-line! Climbers were attached to a rope with a bowline around the waist. As climbing developed, polymers were used, harnesses and protection improved and the leader was prepared to fall. Thus dynamic ropes were invented to absorb the impact of a fall by stretching (about 15 per cent) like a very strong rubber band. However, static ropes—those without rubber-band properties—are preferable for many recreational uses. Static

Static-rope country *par excellence*; Belmore Falls, Blue Mountains, New South Wales. David Carmichael

This survey summarises the findings of the writer, who was selected for the task because of his knowledge of the subject and his impartiality, among other things. The survey was checked and verified by Scott Edwards, and reviewed by at least three of *Wild's* editorial staff. It is based on the items' availability and specifications at the time of this issue's production; ranges and specifications may have changed since then.

Some aspects of this survey, such as the assessment of value and features—and especially the inclusion/exclusion of certain products—entail a degree of subjective judgment on the part of the author, the referee and *Wild*, space being a key consideration.

'Value' is based primarily upon price relative to features and quality. A product with more elaborate or specialised features may be rated more highly by someone whose main concern is not price.

An important criterion for inclusion in this *Wild* survey is 'wide availability'. To qualify, a product must usually be stocked by a number of specialist outdoors shops in the central business districts of major Australian capital- and other cities.

Despite these efforts to achieve accuracy, impartiality, comprehensiveness and usefulness, no survey is perfect. Apart from the obvious human elements that may affect assessment, the quality, materials and specifications of any product may vary markedly from batch to batch and even from sample to sample. It is ultimately the responsibility of readers to determine what is best for their particular circumstances and for the use they have in mind for gear reviewed.

ropes should be referred to as low stretch kernmantel ropes.

This is a survey of LSK ropes suitable for activities such as abseiling, caving and canyoning. These ropes are readily available in retail shops. Absent from the table are two ropes by Australian manufacturer Donaghy's: a 10 millimetre rope and a 12 millimetre one, both made of polyester and selling for \$5.70 a metre and \$6.70 a metre, respectively. Donaghy's

ropes are not readily available; contact the manufacturer for distribution details. Look around for other ropes that may not be readily available. Also absent from the table is the Antipodes rope by French manufacturer Beal. This is about to be (re)released in Australia.

Some manufacturers—Edelrid, for example—produce a wide range of ropes including a 10 millimetre Superstatic at \$3.95 a metre and an 11 millimetre Pro-

static at \$4.20 a metre; both are made of nylon. Other brands have only a few models and not all importers carry the complete range of ropes available from a manufacturer. Some brands, such as the Scottish Cairngorm, are no longer imported into Australia.

Deciding which rope to buy is more difficult than choosing other items of equipment. All ropes are strong enough; all appear to do the same job; you can't

Wild Gear Survey

Static ropes

	Diameter, millimetres	Polymer	Breaking force, kilonewtons	Dynamic strength	Elongation	Mass (dry), grammes/metre	Ability to knot	Value for money	Comments	Approx price a metre, \$
Bluewater Australia										
	Bluewater II + Plus	9	N	18.5	9	14	55	0.50	★★★★ US. Gold colour with blue fleck. Bundles of DTCC for low spin	3.30
	Bluewater II + Plus Dry	9	N	19	9	14	58	0.58	★★★★ US. Gold colour with green fleck. Bundles of DTCC. D	4.10
	Bluewater II + Plus	11	N	30	17	1	90	0.87	★★★ Aus. US. Gold colour with blue fleck. Bundles of DTCC & 10, 13 mm	4.70
Cousin France										
	Spelunca	9	N	22.7	7	3.8	58	0.71	★★★ EN 8. OD & 10.5 mm	3.50
	Canyon	10	PP (core), N (sheath)	18	5 @ 55 kg	1.8	54	0.72	★★ No standard applies to ropes constructed of this material. Highly abrasion-resistant sheath	4.30
	Spelunca	11	N	30.9	8 @ 100 kg	1.8	75	0.78	★★★ EN A. Specifically designed for caving. OD	4.50
Edelrid Germany										
	Superstatic	9	N	22.8	4	4.2 (50–150 kg)	51	0.73	★★★★ 'EN 8'. OD & 10 mm without D	3.00
	Softstatic	10.5	N	29	11	4.8 (50–150 kg)	68	0.55	★★★★ EN A	3.90
	Superstatic	11	N	31	18	3.7 (50–150 kg)	74	0.72	★★★ EN A. OD. Available in other colours	4.50
Edelweiss Austria										
	Caving Rope	11	N	30	na	2.5	76	0.89	★★★★ EN A	4.00
Kinnears Australia										
	Azapline †	11	N	32.4	na	1	124	1.0	★★★ Aus. Specialised rescue rope	4.95
Mammut Switzerland										
	Mammut Static †	10	N	25	na	<1.5	66	na	★★★★ EN A. Same nylon as Cordura for good abrasion resistance	3.50
	Mammut Static	11	N	33	na	<2	79	0.89	★★★ As above	4.50
Marlow UK										
	Marlow LSK †	11	N	31	49	3.7 (50–150 kg)	77	0.89	★★★★ EN A. TB to reduce spin. D is standard	4.50
	Marlow Black Absel †	11	P	30	4	0.8 (50–150 kg)	95.4	0.51	★★ Aus. EN A. Black with white core to spot abrasion damage. D is standard	6.50
Rivory Joanny France										
	Static 9	9	N	18	5	4.9	57	0.87	★★★ EN 8. Also available as Rivory Joanny Explo B mm for cordelette	3.50
	Superstatic †	10	N	22	5 @ 100 kg	4.2	65.9	na	★★ EN A. 32 CS & 10.5 mm	3.90
	Superstatic	11	N	22	5 @ 100 kg	4.1	75.7	0.51	★★★★ EN A. 32 CS	4.20
Sterling USA										
	Sterling Static †	9.5	N	27.2	na	1.5	75.7	na	US. Available in a range of sheath colours. 48 CS	na
	Sterling Static	11.1	N	36.4	na	1.5	90.8	1.35	★★ US. Available in a range of sheath colours	5.50

● poor ●● average ●●● good ●●●● excellent Polymer: Nylon (polyamide), Polyester, PP polypropylene Aus Australian Standard CS Number of carrier strands in the sheath (16 if not specified) D dry treatment DTCC double-twist cable core Dynamic strength is the number of factor-one falls a rope can sustain using a standard weight (80 kilograms unless otherwise stated) for a given rope diameter Elongation is the percentage of stretch at 80 kilograms or as stated EN A European Norm Type A EN B European Norm Type B OD optional dry treatment TB torque balanced US US National Fire Protection Association Standard & other diameters specified na not available † not seen by author †† not seen by referee The country listed after the manufacturer's name is the country in which the products are made

knots in them and none have fancy side pockets or other features. You don't even get a large choice of colours—most of these ropes are white with a single-colour fleck! How, then, do you compare ropes?

Diameter

Most people use ropes with a diameter of 9–11 millimetres. A thicker rope is stronger and is less likely to be abraded or even chopped by careless usage, but it is heavier. If you use 9 millimetre ropes for abseiling and canyoning, you may have to replace them more often. However, if you use single-rope techniques for caving you will definitely have to rig more carefully. Beginner SRT cavers may still wish to rig with 11 millimetre ropes for a greater safety margin.

Polymer

A rope's construction determines its ease of handling and strength. This includes the type of polymers used and the way in which the fibres are laid in the kernmantel. Most ropes are made of nylon (polyamide). However, polyester ropes absorb less water and polypropylene-cored ropes have a highly abrasion-resistant, nylon sheath because of the extremely low melting point of the polypropylene core. Should the sheath melt it would lead to very greatly reduced strength in the rope. Deaths have occurred due to the incorrect use of polypropylene ropes. *Be sure that you know what you are doing*, and discard or chop the rope if the core becomes exposed due to abrasion.

All ropes in this survey are of kernmantel (core and sheath) construction. However, the tightness with which the sheath is woven and its number of carrier strands will affect its flexibility, its abrasion resistance and the amount of grit it absorbs. The type of polymer will affect the rope's strength and its resistance to abrasion. As well, construction determines how much a rope spins—this can be quite nauseating on long, free-hanging pitches. However, the rope twisting through some descenders will often be the most significant source of spin. Resistance to spin is therefore a desirable characteristic and some manufacturers use methods of construction which reduce spin.

Breaking force

This is generally expressed in kilonewtons. A rope with a breaking force of 20 kilonewtons (20 000 newtons) will hold a mass of about 2040 kilograms (that is, divide the breaking force by ten if you only visualise the rope supporting a heavy object such as a two tonne truck).

Dynamic strength

This is the number of factor-one falls a rope can sustain using a standard weight for a given rope diameter. Most new ropes survive a small number of such falls but with used ropes this figure drops off rapidly.

Static ropes are not really meant to withstand this type of abuse and you shouldn't lead on a static rope. However, because accidents happen all ropes are designed to be slightly elastic. For that one-off disaster manufacturers also quote a peak impact force. See 'Points to watch'.

Elongation

Elongation in use is the percentage of stretch, usually with an 80 kilogram load. Ropes with lower values will be less bouncy and therefore better for prusiking. Also, they will be better for instructing beginner abseilers—there won't be any unerving stretch as the abseiler leans back over the edge for the first time.

Mass (dry)

Mass is often incorrectly called weight. It is really only a consideration if you are carrying long lengths of rope. Most manufacturers only quote a figure for dry

mass but when a rope is wet you really notice its mass. Some ropes have water-resistant fibres or coatings but water can still be absorbed between the fibres and so they still behave like sponges. Older, furrer ropes absorb more water. Ropes with a dry treatment cost about 30–50 cents more a metre and are more popular with canyoneers.

Ability to knot

Ease of handling is an important factor. This determines how easily you can tie a rope into knots, slide it through a descender, pull it down from above and stuff it into a pack. This can best be gauged by quoting the ability to knot. This is measured with a standard wedge inserted into a single, overhand knot under a prescribed tension. The diameter of the hole is divided by that of the rope. However, all ropes stiffen with age, ultraviolet light and the accumulation of grit. Some of the stronger ropes eventually behave more like wire cables. Throw them away when they become unmanageable!

Standards

Rope manufacturers may quote several standards. The Australian Rescue Standard is for rescue ropes and only applies to ropes with a diameter of at least 11 millimetres, with a contrasting sheath colour. The European Norm applies to thicker ropes (Type A) for all recreational purposes, also to rigging and industrial uses. It also applies to lighter ropes (Type B) unsuitable for rigging and industrial uses. This standard is mandatory for ropes sold in Europe and therefore represents the de facto world standard. There is also a US National Fire Protection Association Standard.

Included in these standards are other features such as peak impact force; knot-breaking force; percentage shrinkage; sheath slippage; and percentage mass of core and sheath. (The greater the percentage of

Points to watch

Diameter

The actual diameter of a rope may vary by as much as five per cent from the value quoted. There are 'skinny' 9 millimetre ropes and 'fat' 11 millimetre ones. Be sure that you are comfortable hanging on a thin thread. Alternatively, consider whether a thick rope will slide through your descender.

Length

Most of these ropes are sold from 200 metre rolls. Ropes shrink in length; about two per cent initially and as much as ten per cent as they get older. Allow for this when you buy.

Sheath

Sheath slippage may occur in ropes where the sheath is more loosely woven. Excess sheath can be cut off or the rope can be washed before use so that the sheath shrinks on to the core.

Coloured rope

Some brands have the option of coloured rope which shows up the white core at points where the sheath is abraded. This may also be a useful feature to consider for canyoning trips, allowing you easily to determine which rope to pull down. Do not confuse a coloured low stretch kernmantel rope with a dynamic one and go leading on it!

Peak impact force

Static ropes aren't really designed to absorb the energy of a fall. If you slip and load a static rope, great force is exerted on other components in the belay chain. Peak impact force measures the maximum force exerted should a fall occur. Lower values mean the rope absorbs more energy—there will be less harm to yourself and less chance of your anchors failing.

Old stock

The ropes in some shops may be old stock. Check the specifications of the ropes on sale with the retailer.

sheath, the greater the resistance to abrasion.) If you wish to consider these features in your choice ask the retailer for the latest catalogue, which should contain the relevant specifications—or consult the Internet.

Price

The prices quoted are the retail prices recommended by the manufacturers or importers but the price of a rope in a shop may be different due to transport costs or the retailer's mark-up. When this survey was compiled the Australian dollar was plummeting, which may result in imported ropes becoming more expensive. ●

Stephen Bunton (see Contributors in Wild no 6) is a caver and climber with many years of experience. He moved to Tasmania to bag as many deep caves as possible but is at present preoccupied with reaching the maximum number of significant bushwalking summits.





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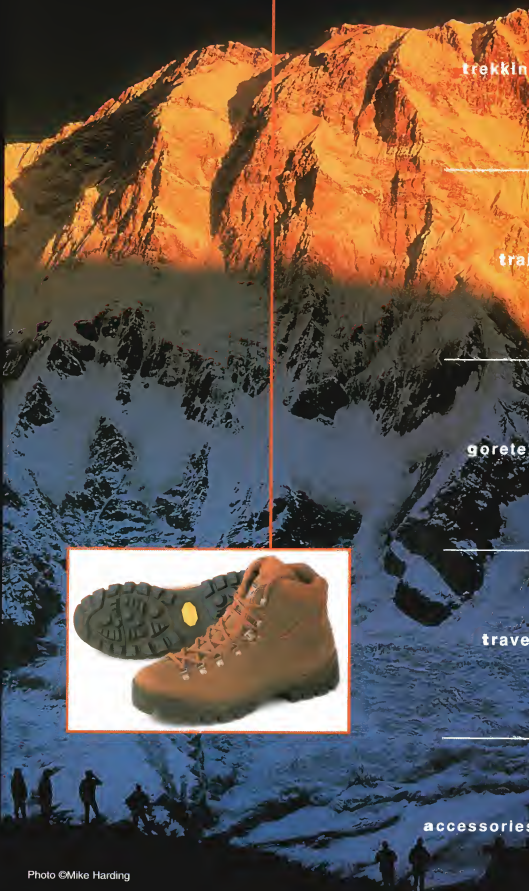


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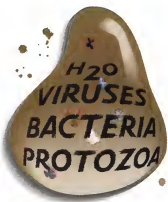


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While the water in backcountry streams often looks pristine and clean, it is unfortunately hiding many invisible microorganisms, which are just as happy to live in humans. Some of these bugs include protozoa like Giardia, bacteria such as E. coli and dangerous viruses. So even if the water might appear crystal clear, it may in fact be very dirty.

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The *Berghaus XFNitro 24* (24 litres) *day pack* moulds to your body by using a compression 'shield' integrated with the shoulder harness and hip-belt. The pack is loaded from the side and comes with a mesh net for carrying items. If you prefer a less affectionate *Berghaus* pack, try the *Freeflow 35+8* (43 litres). This top-loading pack has a ventilation panel which supports the body of the pack away from your back. It includes a hip-belt. Both are distributed by *Outdoor Agencies*. Available at *Paddy Pallin* shops. RRP \$155.90 and \$109.90, respectively.

CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

For a cloudy day

The knee-length *Gore-Tex Cirrostratus* *paria* is designed for bushwalking and ski-touring while carrying a pack. It features a hood, chest pockets, a map pocket, and pit zips under the arms for ventilation.

Available from *Mountain Designs* shops. RRP \$470.

Easy going

Salomon has produced the *Authentic 5 GTX* walking boot, said to be 'ideal' for light bushwalking. The leather boot has a *Contagrip* sole and a *Gore-Tex* membrane. Widely distributed by *Bursill Sports*gear. RRP \$219.



Sandal scandal

We inspected three *Shukas* sport sandals made by South African manufacturer *Action Africa*. Both the *White Water* and the *Hiker* have nylon straps whereas



the *Raider* has padded leather ones. The sandals are designed to displace water from underfoot, absorb shock and be non-slip. Distributed by *AustralEx Trade*. Available from selected *Myer* stores and sport- and outdoors shops. RRP \$89, \$99 and \$110, respectively.



Clockwise from above: *Birkenstock Ottawa* sandals; *Exel Hiking* (left) and *Hiking Classic* walking poles; *Snowgum Checkerboard Mat*; *Shukas White Water* sandal; *Salomon Authentic 5 GTX* boot.

Another sandal we looked at was the unisex *Ottawa*. This has a foot-bed which can be removed to be washed or replaced. Made by German manu-

facturer *Birkenstock*, it has a padded leather upper and a 'hard-wearing' polyurethane sole with a 'strong tread pattern'. It can be worn in water.

Available at the *Birkenstock Boutique* in Melbourne and Canberra. RRP \$258.

MISCELLANEOUS

PLAY CHECKERS, WILL SLEEP

Snowgum is selling its own self-inflating mat which has a checkerboard printed on the front! The *Checkerboard Mat* is made from non-slip polyester and contains



open-cell foam. It is 183 centimetres long and retails for \$99.95.

DRY FEET

In a 1997 survey of *waterproofing agents* for walking boots, a US outdoors magazine rated *Tectron Leather Outdoor Boot/Shoe Protector* as one of the most effective. *Tectron* treatments are formulated to give maximum water- and soil repellency to materials used in outdoors clothing and gear; two others are *Outdoor Fabric Protector* and *Shi/Snowboard Fabric Protector*. These 'environmentally safe' fluoropolymer sprays are made by US company *Blue Magic Products*. Distributed by *Outdoor Things*, phone 018 396 462. RRP \$6.70, \$6.05 and \$6.05, respectively.

Sydney-siders take note!

This year's *Scout* water purifier has a new base and side-mounted, large-diameter hoses which allow you to place the unit on the ground for easier pumping; two prefilters are also included. The unit can apparently filter one litre a minute and eliminate micro-organisms such as viruses, bacteria and, Sydney's downfall, giardia. Made in the USA by *PUR* and distributed by *Outdoor Agencies*. RRP \$179.95.

Poles apart

A walking pole offers reassuring support and balance for the walker-cum-trekker, particularly on steep and loose ground. *Merit Apparel* is distributing two new models, the *Hiking* and the *Hiking Classic*, from Italian manufacturer *Exel*. Made from aluminium, each model consists of three



movable sections and is capped with a moulded handle. Deftly pick your way down a spring snowdrift with a pair of *Backcountry* telescopic *shi*

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0011

GPS comparative field test

I tested two instruments: a cheaper Magellan GPS 2000, and a more expensive Silva XL300.

They were compared by carrying them from a high, exposed position on a headland, Teddys Lookout, at Lorne on Victoria's south-west coast, down to the flat at the mouth of the George River and then up the river valley walking track under forest cover to Allenvale. From there we returned to Lorne along a gravel road, with medium-density forest on either side. The weather was clear and dry throughout my test of these instruments.

Both instruments were allowed to establish our position before, about a kilometre away, so that they would not take long to relocate when started on Teddys Lookout. In two minutes the Silva had located the minimum of four satellites required to operate in 3D mode; the Magellan achieved 3D mode in three minutes.

The instruments were tuned off and carried about 300 metres down to the flat at the mouth of the George River. Here, the valley is wide and open. Both instruments reached 3D mode within one-and-a-half minutes.

We then walked into light tree cover. The Magellan switched to 2D mode, then began to flash a warning that it was losing signals. A 30-second stop allowed the Magellan to settle in 2D mode. We continued walking and the Silva oscillated several times between 2D and 3D modes as we moved, locking in 3D if we stopped for a moment. By the time we had reached the first footbridge, with the valley becoming narrower and tree cover heavier, the Magellan had lost reception and did not recover it during a five-minute stop.

Continuing on, the Magellan intermittently recovered 2D mode with a flashing warning. Stopping again at the rock bridge the Magellan had lost position and did not regain it until we reached the road at Allenvale. Its Satellite Status display showed that it could detect two satellites with signal strengths of zero (values of four to eight are normal in open conditions). The Silva oscillated between four and five satellites giving usable signals and a Geometric Dilution of Precision value of 5.09 (this figure drops below 3.0 in good, open conditions).

From this point the Silva maintained 3D position except for one momentary drop back to a flashing 2D as we walked into a small cutting. It recovered to 2D mode instantly when we stopped there and to 3D mode after 30 seconds.

After reaching the road at Allenvale the Magellan was able to re-establish our location in 2D mode. At this point the Silva's batteries, which had been heavily used before the test, indicated low voltage and the unit shut down soon after. The Magellan had been loaded with new batteries just before starting the test. For most of the walk along the road to Lorne it maintained 2D mode, with one loss of position regained after a one-and-a-half minute stop. After resting its batteries the Silva was used briefly to obtain a quick position fix.

Searching for extreme conditions I carried the Silva on a walk in the Mt Worth State Park, South Gippsland, Victoria, under tall and heavy alpine-ash forest, in gullies and in steady rain. There, it also lost reception to the extent that it became unusable until we moved to a more open area. When this happens it's back to a map, a compass and dead reckoning. Never go without the old, basic tools!

Conclusion

The Magellan works well in open terrain and at sea. It has some neat features. The unit may, however, be slower to use or ineffective in more difficult situations.

The Silva is larger, heavier and more robust. It works efficiently in more difficult situations. The unit lacks some of the display features of the Magellan but other features make it easier to use in many situations and more economical with battery power.

User features

The Magellan GPS 2000 costs about \$300. Its menu structure is good and easily followed. It provides a plot of the path taken (which can include zigzags resulting from occasional, spurious calculations) and way points (landmarks) can be extracted from this track. Every ten minutes it automatically saves a position and maintains the last 21 of these positions. The Magellan can store 200 way points. (These will be lost if batteries are removed—or flattened—for longer than 20 minutes, after which they must be keyed in again.) Way points can be aggregated into named 'routes'. A warning symbol flashes when battery power is inadequate. Seventy-four different national grid systems are catered for. It can display sunrise and sunset times and moon phase for any date. The unit weighs 310 grams.

The Silva XL300 costs about \$890. It maintains operation under more difficult conditions, in valleys, under forest and in rain. It has a large character display. Menus are very concise. It has more technical, diagnostic displays relating to signal strength and precision of position. There are fewer, larger buttons. The Silva can store 300 way points. (These are retained for more than ten years, even with flat batteries or when the batteries are removed.) It starts up in data entry mode, with an 80 per cent saving of power while you key in or read out way points. A battery voltage display enables you to check the state of the battery under load. A message for failing batteries is followed by automatic shut-down. The battery voltage display can be used to monitor vehicle voltage when vehicle power is used. When moving slowly, variable damping gives a more consistent speed and position. The unit automatically turns off if satellite signals are not acquired within 25 minutes. One hundred and three different national grid systems are catered for. Optional features include a map digitiser, a computer cable and software, a differential signal receiver and a power cable for external 12-volt vehicle power. The Silva XL300 weighs 450 grams.

John Poppins

poles, also available and of similar design. RRP \$62.50, \$64.50 and \$109.90, respectively.



Clockwise from above: *Wild* staff members Lachlan Drummond, left, and Stephen Curtain sampling Soft Path Cuisine's Curry Inna Hurri; GSI Outdoors fold-up Wine Glass; Casio Triple Sensor watch; Canon Ix7 camera.

Lightweight dining

Outdoor Agencies is now distributing freeze-dried products made in Australia by *Adventure Foods*. *Chicken Tetrizzini*, *Spaghetti Bolognese* and *Hearty Beef and Beans* are available; another eight varieties are expected to be on the market later this year. RRP \$7.95.

If you want a *Curry Inna Hurri* don't go past this spicy and filling *dehydrated meal*. It feeds two or three and can be made in about 15 | respectively.



minutes, using two pots. Extra spices and chutney are included. We ate chick-peas in a spicy tomato sauce served over curried couscous. Made by *Soft Path Cuisine* (Canada) and distributed by *Tantra Australia*. RRP \$17.95.

Continental has released snack-sized *meals* of spiral pasta which can be cooked in four minutes. An 80 gram packet of *Pasta Snack* is available from supermarkets. RRP 90 cents.

Fold-up wine glass

This convenient, plastic *Wine Glass* has a base which can be detached and stored in the cup! Another peripatetic, plastic product made by *GSI Outdoors* is the slim 450 millilitre *Flask water-bottle*. Both are made from Lexan resin and are 'virtually unbreakable'. Distributed widely by *Spelean*. RRP \$15 and \$25, respectively.

Featherweight cameras

If you have some spare cash floating around, check out these new *Canon cameras*. The *Elph 370Z* is a lightweight (210 grams) autofocus camera. It has a 23-69 millimetre lens, a minimum focusing distance of 60 centimetres and an 'innovative' flash system. The *Eos IX7* is claimed to be the smallest and lightest (360 grams) single-lens reflex camera ever made by Canon. The price includes a handy 22-55 millimetre lens. Both are 'Advanced Photo System' cameras. Widely available. RRP \$599 and \$1099,

ANOTHER GPS MODEL?

Magellan has released a *Global Positioning System receiver* which provides 'outstanding' lock-on satellite tracking even in dense cover, it is claimed. The *GPS 2000XL* is available from many outdoors shops. RRP \$465.

They even tell the time!

Made by *Casio* are the *Twin- and Triple Sensor digital watches* which can estimate altitude and give barometric pressure and temperature readings. The latter can also give digital compass bearings. RRP \$429 and \$529, respectively.



A rumble in the jungle

Recently the principal of Melbourne's *Wilderness Wear*, Philip Enderby, was working late when the fax churned out a request from an embattled Steve Worley, project geologist with a mining company operating deep in the Amazon jungle of French Guiana.

It's stinking hot, it's wet and your clothes are rotting. Your 49-man crew is on the verge of mutiny because you're the only one who isn't bothered—because you're wearing *Wilderness Wear Microlite clothing*. It's no wonder that Worley fired off the fax that roused Enderby.

The story has a happy ending. The order was on its way within 24 hours, mutiny was narrowly averted, and Enderby is now revelling in the public relations mileage gained from having the episode reported in a national magazine. In short, another Australian success story! 📺

TRIX

A home-made candle-lamp

Robert Reindorp throws some light on the subject

The 'recycled plastic-bottle candle-lamp and campers' friend' is surprisingly windproof and can be carried at a steady walking pace. It will stand upright in a boot or hang by its handle.

Cut a 1.25 litre plastic drink bottle in half—the bottles that work best have round shoulders and parallel sides. Retain the 'neck' half. To make a handle, bend a piece of wire so that it has the same shape as the profile of the 'neck' half. Bore two small, opposing holes about a centimetre from the cut edge and fasten the handle to the plastic.

Use bits of adhesive tape from the first aid kit to secure the optional, aluminium-foil reflector to the plastic. Finally, insert the candle up through the neck, positioning it so that the flame does not reach above the mouth of the lamp.

Always keep the lamp upright when in use! *Beeswax candles* seem less prone to the rigours of the track and throw a warm, soft light. When not in use, fold the handle over the neck and replace the candle with socks, for example, and the whole thing will vanish into your rucksack.

Wild welcomes readers' contributions to this section; payment is at our standard rate. Send them to the address at the end of this department.



Let there be light! *Chris Baxter*

This department describes new products which the editorial staff consider will be of interest to readers. The tests they apply for inclusion are whether a product is useful for the rucksack sports, and whether it is fundamentally new (or newly available in Australia). The reports are based on information provided by the manufacturer/distributor. As is the case with all editorial text appearing in *Wild*, publication of material in this department is *not in any way* connected with advertising. Submissions for possible publication are accepted from advertisers and from businesses not advertising in *Wild*, as well as from our readers. (See also the footnote below.)

Products (on loan to *Wild*) and/or information about them, including colour slides, are welcome for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.



Lexan® Wine Glass

The GSI Lexan® Wine Glass is the perfect addition for your next camping trip or picnic. The patent pending design unscrews at the midpoint of the stem, so the base can be compactly snapped into the bowl for packing and storage. Super lightweight and nearly indestructible, yet elegantly shaped. 250gm.

Bugaboo™ Teflon®/Aluminium Cooksets



The aluminium Bugaboo™ Teflon® cooksets are light and the Teflon interior coating makes cleaning a breeze! The sets nest compactly and the lids act as fry pans

DiamondBack Gripper™ and mesh storage bag included.

Glacier Stainless Steel™ Cooksets



The Glacier Stainless Steel™ cooksets are finely crafted culinary pieces for the functional gourmet crafted from 18/8 stainless steel. The mirror-bright finish looks great! All pieces have rounded corners for easy cleaning and serving. The sets nest compactly and the lids act as fry pans. DiamondBack gripper and mesh storage bag included. The five and seven piece sets include a bonus nylon mini-spatula



Espresso...

Treat yourself to an absolutely delicious espresso with these compact little appliances! They are crafted from rugged, yet lightweight aluminium. Simply fill the basket with well-ground coffee, add water to valve level and screw the unit shut. Place it on your stove at low heat and within minutes, the steam pipe delivers a flavourful cup of European-style brew. Available in one and four cup sizes, red, blue, green or polished.



Or if you prefer to brew great coffee regardless of where you are try the new Lexan® JavaPress™. Perfect for camping, backpacking, boats, caravans and car camping, just add boiling water to coffee grounds, let stand for a minute or two and you will have a perfect cup of fresh coffee. The GSI JavaPress is dishwasher safe and can also be used for preparing tea! Available in two sizes: 280 ml & 925 ml

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Lexan® Waterproof Utility Boxes



LEXAN® Waterproof Utility Boxes are nearly indestructible, available in three sizes. They are clear, so you can see what's inside, and have attachment loops to tie them down securely!



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Stealth® S1 rubber soles



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Black/Slate/Sand, U.S. sizes 7-15. Stormbrella™ waterproof, vapour permeable membrane, Stealth® S1 outsole, injection moulded high-density polymer midsole, thermal insulated full length cushioning, waterproof split leather upper.



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 - Lifetime guarantee
 - 100% Australian-made
- (NO FOREIGN LABOUR CONTENT)

SAVANNA (Travel Series)

- Tapered rectangular
 - 3 fill weights – 380 gm, 550 gm and 750 gm
 - Optional XL available (20 cm longer)
 - Pertex Ripstop fabrics. Optional Pertex waterproof, breathable Endurance outer available
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 - Lifetime guarantee
 - 100% Australian-made
- (NO FOREIGN LABOUR CONTENT)

Two-way, left- and right-hand zip configuration on all sleeping-bags enables them to be joined side by side.

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- Standard 3/4
122 x 51 x 3.8 cm Navy
- Standard Long
183 x 51 x 3.8 cm Forest



NEW

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Tundra



Savanna

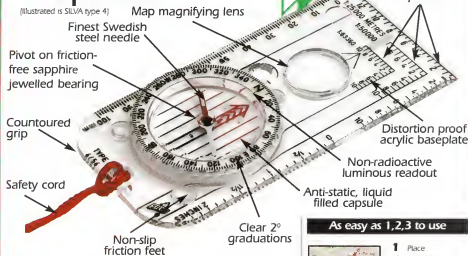
Murray River. Photo by Anthony
Spillman

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(Illustrated is SILVA type 4)



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Choose from many different SILVA models at better camping stores throughout Australia, but beware of cheaper, look-alike imitations.

Look for this display in all good camping stores that sell quality equipment

You'll find a compass displayed to suit your exact requirements and budget. Try them for yourself and test the "Easy as 1,2,3" SILVA system.



Finding your way in the bush with SILVA

Map and compass use opens up the real enjoyment and many rewards of finding your way in the bush with full confidence.

The Swedish SILVA designers have made the tedious task of compass work a pure simplicity. When you add a SILVA compass to a topographic map and a few basic map reading instructions, you gain a sixth sense. The sense of "seeing" over the hill; knowing what to expect behind it and how to get there with the least effort. Most importantly, it will enable you to get back to your home base, as well as find that special spot again next time.

Fun & safety in the bush

Good compass and map use increases the fun and safety of outings in the bush.

With a good map and a SILVA Compass, a sense of complete independence and freedom of movement is acquired. Any time that you feel like leaving a track or road, you will be able to take a direct route through the bush knowing the direction and distance required to travel. A standard SILVA compass is not expensive, retailing for around \$30. Some more professional models cost a little more. And there are more than 60 different models in the SILVA range.

The SILVA Guarantee

SILVA guarantee that their compasses are unsurpassed in quality and accuracy, being shockproof, waterproof and come with an exclusive 6 year warranty

backed by an Australian after sales and spare parts service base. There is no other compass that is more accurate than SILVA.



Insist on quality ask for a SILVA Compass!



As easy as 1,2,3 to use



1 Place compass on map with edge along direction of travel



2 Rotate the capsule until "N" on compass dial points north on map
North-South lines should be parallel with magnetic North grid lines on the map



3 Hold compass horizontally in front of you and rotate your body until red point of needle is over red part of North arrow. Look up, pick up a land mark and walk toward it

Logging lock-out

Draconian new Victorian regulations exposed

● Commit a crime by strolling into a forest?

An *Age* article by barrister and co-founding director of Wild Publications Brian Walters exposed that on 1 June the Victorian Government passed regulations that made it a criminal offence for unauthorised people to enter a 'forest operations zone'. The regulations—which were passed without publicity—do not apply if you are a logger, a police officer or a person with written authorisation.

In 'You can't go down to the woods today', published on 27 July, Walters indicated that the zones are very large and are at present in East Gippsland and the Otways. Neither signs nor fences mark these areas. You are expected to get the regulations yourself and find the boundaries of these zones. Trespassers face a fine of \$2000.

Many of the zones go right up to private land and they border National Parks for many kilometres. Major logging roads—and only 30 metres on each side of them—are open. Some of these zones have no logging scheduled within them.

When you apply for a permit you'll have to state your purpose for going into the forest. Walters questioned why we should have to obtain written authorisation to wander in publicly owned bush—or even to protest.

● Reforms of national laws

New national environmental laws will soon be tabled in Federal Parliament. Under the proposed reforms, all existing national environmental legislation will be reduced to the *Environment Protection Act*, the *Biodiversity Conservation Act* and a new 'Heritage' Act; the responsibilities for environmental matters will be transferred from the Federal Government to States wherever possible; there will be an increased reliance on State-based assessments and other accredited State procedures; and there will be severe restrictions on the range of environmental matters that currently require the automatic participation of the Commonwealth Government.

● Protect our wetlands!

In May the World Wide Fund for Nature released a report which details the failures of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to meet their international obligations to protect our wetlands. *Australia's Wetlands Record—2nd Triennial Report*



outlines that only three of our nine jurisdictions have a wetlands conservation policy. None has a plan for implementation and most of our wetlands haven't any active conservation management. Many of the 698 sites identified as being of national importance are not protected by conservation reserves or programmes, and only 49 are listed under the Ramsar Convention, an agreement on wetlands of international importance. A conference of signatories will be held next May.

● Pasmenco ends ocean dumping

The April issue of *Mining Monitor* reports that Pasmenco is co-treating zinc wastes after 24 years of dumping those created at its Risdon smelter in Tasmania in the ocean. The process entails modifying the waste product and sending it to Pasmenco's lead smelter in Port Pirie for treatment. During the late 1980s the company resisted ending its ocean-dumping programme, claiming that it would make the zinc smelter uneconomic and that it was environmentally preferable to dump the waste in the ocean rather than in landfill.

● Campaign against Amcor

The year-long consumer and investment campaign against Australian paper and pack-

An article by Wild Publications director Brian Walters (pictured above the Crackback River, New South Wales) in Melbourne's *Age* newspaper revealed the extent of the Victorian Government's recent forest-access restrictions. *Chris Boxter*

aging giant Amcor continues. Until now the focus of the campaign has been on boycotting Reflex, a photocopy paper made from virgin eucalypt fibre mainly sourced from native forests in Victoria and Tasmania. See Action Box item 1.

NEW SOUTH WALES

● Resort revamp wrangle

On 6 July the *Age* reported that a ski fields company wanted to take over the planning for a controversial resort expansion in the Kosciuszko National Park. Perisher Blue asked a commission of inquiry to nominate it to fill a 'policy and process vacuum' in a development proposal for a further 1000 beds and commercial facilities. It also wants a new regional development committee for Kosciuszko National Park to consider further increasing accommodation limits. This would remove control

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from the National Parks & Wildlife Service, whose 'Perisher master plan' for the 1000 extra beds is being investigated by the inquiry. The master plan includes four-storey blocks of luxury apartments and a new ski-village centre. Its progress has become complicated because most of the development is on a car park that is leased to Perisher Blue until 2025.



Perisher ski resort, NSW. Due for a major expansion? Glenn Tempster. Near right, rock engraving, Devils Rock, Yengo National Park, Blue Mountains, NSW. Far right, natural arch, Nattai National Park, Blue Mountains. Geoff Masley

VICTORIA

Key Acts under microscope

Three key environmental Acts are being reviewed by the State Government under the guise of National Competition Policy. This policy means that legislation should not restrict competition unless the objectives of the legislation can only be achieved by such restriction.

The Acts under review are: the *Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994*, which among other things has the purpose to reduce the impact of feral cats on our wildlife; the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, which aims to ensure that all flora and fauna in Victoria can survive and flourish in the wild; and the *Wildlife Act 1975*; the principal objective of its licensing system is to conserve wild animals and to minimise illegal acquisition and trade of such animals.

It is important that our politicians be made aware that the long-term survival of our native flora and fauna is a fundamental community right and cannot be assessed in

In June the Commonwealth Government nominated the 'Greater Blue Mountains Area' for the World Heritage List. The nominated area extends over one million hectares and comprises the following National Parks: Blue Mountains, Wollemi, Yengo, Nattai, Kanangra-Boyd, Gardens of Stone and Thirlmere Lakes; also the Jenolan Caves Karst Conservation Reserve. A decision will be made by the World Heritage Committee late next year.

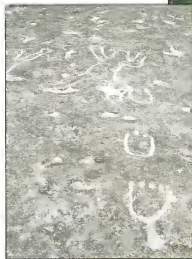
To justify the nomination, four criteria out of a possible ten were cited. They related to: biodiversity (especially eucalypts); habitats of threatened species; aesthetic values; and cultural associations.

The last is novel. Only a handful of areas have been inscribed on the list as cultural landscapes and all in relation to association with indigenous people. This nomination presents the Blue Mountains as having outstanding universal associations for indigenous communities and as the archetypal example of a custodial relationship between an urban, industrial community and its surrounding natural areas.

The most disappointing aspect of the nomination is its failure to include the region's global significance for the understanding of the processes of sandstone erosion as a justification. The major casualty of this omission is Morton National Park, which is excluded from the nomination along with several other Sydney Basin sandstone areas recommended in a 1994 World Heritage assessment made by the Royal Botanic Gardens. Included is the Wollemi National Park, which contains the world's largest, open eucalypt forest wilderness.

The nomination has been made after much effort by conservation groups including the Colong Foundation. Several local municipalities have been very supportive. The nomination would have been further delayed if the Carr Government had not insisted on a stand-alone nomination, thereby rescuing it from the concept of a serial eucalypt nomination including parks from four States. If the Blue Mountains are accepted as a primary eucalypt World Heritage Area, the equally important proposal of the Australian Alps/East Gippsland and far south-east of New South Wales forests with its 'sea to snow' display of the eucalypt associations would make an excellent companion and deserves a separate nomination from that of the Blue Mountains.

Geoff Mosley



terms of its impact on competition in any markets.

See Action Box item 2.

Jillian Arbutnot

● Budget slashed

In the June issue of the Victorian National Parks Association newsletter it was reported that the State Government had slashed the budget of the Department of Natural Resources & Environment by \$24 million. These cuts constitute about 300 jobs, which are to be sourced only from the head office.

Also in the June issue the VNPA claims that Parks Victoria has made radical changes to the July 1987 Tidal River Master Plan for Wilsons Promontory. The association says the plan represents a significant upgrading and an increase in buildings, which constitutes 'a classic example of incremental development'.

On 28 June over 800 people rallied at the National Park to protest against plans by Parks Victoria to commercialise it. Protesters

marched from Lilly Pilly Gully to Tidal River. Earlier, on 6 June, about 75 people at Falls Creek protested the excision of 285 hectares, including Mt McKay, from the Alpine National Park.

● New alpine resort regulations

The *Alpine Resorts (Management) Regulations* 1998 took effect from 30 April. Under these regulations, camping is prohibited within an alpine resort except in an area set aside for the purpose. Any person camping in such an area will be required to obtain a permit. Oversnow vehicles are permitted for rescue work, transport or use associated with a commercial arrangement. Pets can be kept in certain circumstances.

Also, an interim board of management has been established for Mt Stirling. It will oversee the mountain's operations while the State Government considers a proposal from Delatite Shire to manage the resort.

● Sanctuary saved

Trust for Nature has purchased three square kilometres of wetland near Nhill in the far west of the State. Mt Elgin Swamp, a superb

red-gum wetland, was at risk from clearing and overgrazing. The Trust needs to raise \$52 000 to cover the purchase. See Action Box item 3.

● East Gippsland action

The Goolengook blockade is still going, with protesters opposing plans to convert the rest of this masterpiece of nature into a biologically impoverished tree farm. Finding a long-footed potoroo may be what's required.

Take a look at the best of East Gippsland's forests on a Forests Forever Camp at Coongerah from 31 October to 3 November. See Action Box item 4.

Andrew Picone

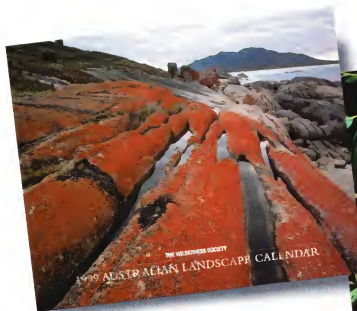
● Possum watch

Environment Victoria is again calling for volunteers to take part in surveys of Lead-beaters possums in the Central Highlands region. See Action Box item 5.

● We are not vandals!

The *Potoroo Review* reports that of the 12 cases of vandalism to logging equipment investigated in East Gippsland since 1992, six have been solved. Not one was due to an environmentalist; all were industry-related!

This wilderness won't last.



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63/COOE 36/5

TASMANIA

● Walking permits

The Parks & Wildlife Service intends to implement a permit system for overnight walkers in Tasmanian World Heritage Areas in the summer of 1999/2000. Refer to the 'Walking Permits' article and the accompanying text box in this issue. See Action Box item 6.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

● Go-ahead for uranium mining trials

The April issue of the *Mining Monitor*

reports that the State Government has approved trial mining using an *in situ* leaching technique at two proposed mines. The approval was given without an environmental impact statement.

The technique which has been proposed entails injecting sulphuric acid and oxygen into aquifers by way of boreholes. Solution bearing uranium is pumped to the surface from a central borehole and the uranium removed in a processing plant. One of the sites, the Beverley uranium project, is near the Gammon Ranges National Park, a popular bushwalking destination in the far north of the State.

Aboriginal Heritage Protection Act 1988. This governed procedures for Aboriginal site protection around the company's Roxby Downs mining lease. Under amendments to the *Roxby Downs (Indenture Ratification) Act of 1982*, the responsibilities for Aboriginal heritage protection of 1.5 million hectares have been transferred from the State Government to the mining company. WMC will now be covered by the 1979 *Aboriginal Heritage Act*, which hasn't been officially proclaimed and has weaker provisions.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

● UNESCO officials to visit Jabiluka

On 25 June the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the heritage committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation had voted to send a mission to investigate whether the Jabiluka uranium mine will threaten the Kakadu World Heritage site. Australia's top environmental science and heritage officials argued against the UNESCO investigation, but failed following a deluge of international concern and daily coverage by the Australian media. However, the Federal Government refused demands to halt construction of the mine at least until after the investigation, which is planned for the end of September or early October.

A poll conducted by Newpoll on 26-28 June found that most Australians are opposed to the development of the Jabiluka uranium mine within the Kakadu National Park. Two-thirds of respondents



Action Box

Readers can take action on the following matters covered in Green Pages in this issue.

1 For further information on the campaign against Amcor, contact the Boycott Woodchipping Campaign, PO Box 2461, Fitzroy, Vic 3065.

2 Issue papers are available from Justine Ivory at the Department of Natural Resources & Environment. Phone (03) 9637 8583.

3 Phone 1800 999 933 to make a donation to Trust for Nature.

4 To help with the Goolengook campaign, phone (03) 9787 7931. For details about the camp, phone either the above number or (03) 5154 0145.

5 To volunteer for the Leadbeaters possum survey, phone (03) 9348 9044.

6 Any suggestions and comments about walking permits should be directed to the Track Management Team, GPO Box 44a, Hobart, Tas 7001.

7 Telephone the Jabiluka hotline on 1300 360 565 to see how you can help to stop Jabiluka or to donate to the Jabiluka Action Fund. Alternatively, meet your local federal member of Parliament.



Hardened track, Walls of Jerusalem, Tasmania. Parks & Wildlife Service, Tasmania. Top, Wilsons Promontory rally, Victoria. Michael Dempsey

● Mining company exempt from Act

The same issue of the *Mining Monitor* reports that State Parliament has passed legislation to exempt Westerrr Mining Corporation from the provisions of the

poll was against it. Of those, 53 per cent were strongly opposed and 14 per cent were somewhat opposed. The poll surveyed 500 people aged 18 years and over in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. See Action Box item 7. ●

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

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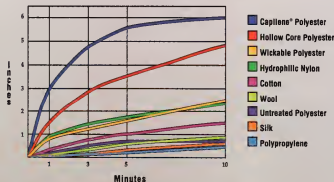
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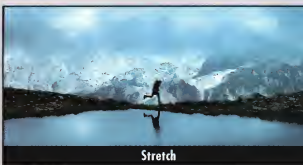
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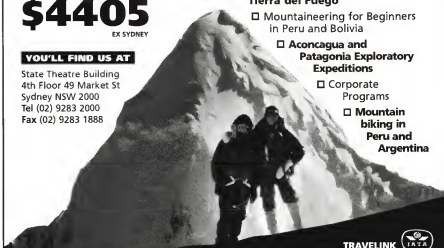
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BOOKS

● Australian Mountains: The Best 100 Walks

by Tyrone Thomas and Sven Klinge (Hill of Content, 1998, RRP \$24.95).

Here is an interesting compilation of walks—many have been previously described in guidebooks by these two authors. The text includes a wide range of places with 81 one-day walks and 19 overnight trips, and a surprise is that not all the walks actually go to the summit. The use of 'best' in the title is unfortunate as the book has been limited to the eastern States and has none of the excellent walks in the Northern Territory and Western Australia—'best' is more a marketing exercise than reality.

Overall, the notes are fairly good and up to date. However, there are wide inconsistencies with extensive route descriptions and background information given for many walks, then only very brief notes for other walks where detail would be helpful. Another inconsistency is that camp-fire bans, camping permits and fees are given for some walks and on others, where strong restrictions apply, there is no mention of them at all which suggests that none apply. To avoid disappointment, users will have to search for more information. They cannot simply rely on these notes for planning trips.

On the positive side, while not the 'best', the walks selected are all interesting. If you are visiting a new region and do not have a local guide, this book will direct you to some worthwhile places.

John Chapman

● A Long Walk in the Australian Bush

by William Lines (UNSW Press, 1998, RRP \$19.95).

'It's boring.' That was a friend's warning when William Lines and his companion Carol decided to walk the 650 kilometre Bibbulmun Track in Western Australia. It winds its way from Perth's outer suburbs to the south coast through jarrah and karri

forests, many of which have been cleared, logged, roaded, dammed or otherwise disturbed. The absence of alpine vistas, deep canyons or herds of wild animals is what led to the uncharitable judgment of Lines's friend.

That mentality would lead to the same conclusion about the book which chronicles

Lines's Bibbulmun journey. There aren't any tales of dramatic rescues and narrow escapes, nor any photographs. Instead, it is a story based on the land. The narrative is like the Bibbulmun itself. It winds its way from the day-to-day bushwalking experiences of Lines, to the area's natural history, back to the Nyungar people who originally inhabited the forests, on to the area's development for forestry and mining, and culminates in a condemnation of so-called

economic rationalism. Brooding over both the walk and the story is the sinister presence of the Department of Conservation & Land Management, the government agency responsible for logging the jarrah and karri forests.

It's a great book. As a bushwalker, I enjoyed sharing the walkers' routine and minor hardships. As a conservationist, I enjoyed the way Lines ruthlessly dismembered the department's rationale for destroying Western Australia's forests. His occasional swipes at the conservation movement were interesting and stimulating even if I didn't always agree with him. According to Lines, environmentalists and nature lovers are not the same thing, for example. 'They represent two entirely different outlooks', he says. How's that? Read *A Long Walk in the Australian Bush* to find out.

Geoff Law

● Key Guide to Australia's National Parks

by Leonard Cronin (New Holland Publishers, revised edition 1998, RRP \$29.95).

As the arithmetic suggests—370 National Parks in 320 pages—this modest paperback is pushing it uphill. The problem is side-stepped by singling out 56 parks for special treatment while the rest are briefly noted. Most of the 'chosen few' are deserving candidates and their summaries combine an evocative description and suggested travel options.

The selection does, however, reflect a hefty bias towards the continent's south-eastern corner. There are no featured parks north of Hinchinbrook Island in Queensland or the Pilbara in Western Australia. Many other remote and significant reserves (including the Wollemi, Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers, Gregory, Rudall River and Gammon Ranges National Parks) are given particularly short shrift.

Maps for the featured parks are clear and concise but their double-page format often leaves pertinent information lost in the 'gutter'. Even more disappointing is the somewhat token offering of landscape photographs—one of which is captioned Rawnleys Bluff, yet shows only a rocky creek-bed.

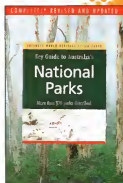
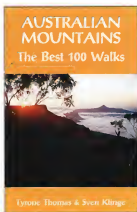
Although this guide might serve as a handy reference it's best suited for car touring and day-trips. Even in the glove box it might prove less than satisfying, especially for regions dealt with in more detailed texts. For instance, it's hard to imagine any inquisitive traveller to Uluru being content with the two-page summary in this book when there is such a brilliant local guide as

Anne Kerle's *Uluru Kata Tjuta & Watarrka*.
 Quentin Chester

● Tuglow Caves

by Ian Cooper, Martin Scott and Kier Vaughan Taylor (Sydney University Speleological Society, 1998, RRP \$16).

Australian caving clubs have a tradition of producing books featuring significant caves or caving areas. The Sydney University



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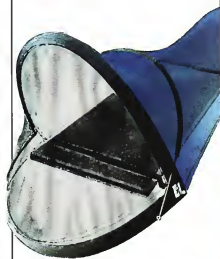
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Speleological Society has been one of the leaders in this field with its efforts at nearby Jenolan. This book is up to SUSS's usual high standard and fully documents the Tuglow area including its history, geology, hydrology and cave biology. The description of the route to and through the cave has its own quaint style. In fact, the whole book takes a refreshing approach, admitting that often the club's caving trips educate a transient population of student cavers about the environment and the value of wilderness in general. No doubt the book has the same educational aim for the wider public. The book is interesting and credible but by its own admission not highly authoritative. The hope is that others will build on the information it contains and to this end the most useful inclusion is the map of the main cave. The topic of surveying permeates the book and the contentious issue of the unpublished 1970s map is raised on numerous occasions. Resurveying the cave was obviously something about which the authors felt strongly but I'm glad they went to the trouble. Their efforts almost doubled the known length of the cave and produced maps and descriptions of the other 13 caves in the area.

Stephen Bunton

● The Himalayan First Aid and Survival Manual

by Jim Duff and Peter Gormly (published by the former and Rejane Belanger, fifth edition 1998, RRP \$8.00 plus postage and packaging from Jim Duff, PO Box 53, Repton, NSW 2454).

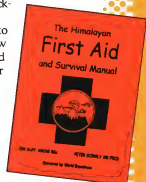
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Although written particularly for that environment, the advice applies equally to most medical conditions with which bushwalkers are faced in Australia (with the exception of altitude sickness!)

The manual is easy to understand and to follow — and very small and light. It is good value for money.

Naturally, people planning an expedition into remote wilderness areas should have first aid training. ●

Damian Welbourn



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